

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAENSIS



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE IDEA OF EVIL IN THE CANTERBURY TALES

by



ANNE CRAWFORD KLOPPENBORG

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1970

Thesis
1970 F
148

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for
acceptance a thesis entitled "The Idea of Evil in the
Canterbury Tales" submitted by Anne Crawford Kloppenborg
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The idea of pilgrimage provides both a form and direction for Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. On a spiritual level, pilgrimage is the action of the soul drawn by love of God to overcome sin through penitence and to gain grace and benediction. Because the Canterbury Tales is based upon pilgrimage, process or movement is of paramount importance in both the aesthetic structure and the theological design. The nature of the process in the Tales is best perceived as one which moves toward a Christian concept of evil, and which offers the remedy of Christian order and grace against that evil.

This study first offers a definition of evil from a theological perspective and discusses the relationship between the concept of pilgrimage and the presence of evil in the Tales. The Second Chapter examines the theological functions of evil and the awareness of evil on the level of the pilgrims' perception. The changes in the theological functions of evil, which are part of the process of the work as a whole, are made clearer in the Third Chapter, in which the tales are discussed from the reader's perspective. In Chapter Four, the aesthetic functions of evil as object are examined in relation to the theological functions of evil as process. The Fifth Chapter shows through discussion of the themes of "game" and "erdest," drunkenness, blindness, and multiplication, that the aesthetic and theological

functions of evil ultimately reinforce one another and, in placing evil as disorder, make possible the movement of the work in pilgrimage. Because the framing idea of pilgrimage is made dynamic basically through a process of overcoming evil, a study of the functions of evil is a fruitful means of perceiving the total process in which the Canterbury Tales is involved. Only when the functions of the idea of evil are clearly perceived can the steps of the particular process of pilgrimage manifest in the Canterbury Tales be delineated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	THE PILGRIMS ' PERCEPTION OF EVIL	14
III	THE READER'S PERSPECTIVE	31
IV	THE SHAPE OF EVIL	58
V	THREADS OF EVIL	88
FOOTNOTES		111
BIBLIOGRAPHY		116

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The frame for the Canterbury Tales is a pilgrimage.

Although the work is apparently incomplete, and there is no definite "Chaucerian" ordering of the tales, the idea of pilgrimage is clearly established in the General Prologue, and mention is made in the prologues and endlinks of the tales of places the pilgrims pass on their road to or from Canterbury. But is the idea of pilgrimage only a convenient frame for the tales, having little influence on the way the pilgrims are presented or on the nature of the themes dealt with, or is the idea one which is so central that the Parson's Tale and the Parson's vow stand as the climax of the work? The Parson promises:

I wol yow telle a myrie tale in prose
To knytte up al this feeste, and make an ende.
And Jhesu, for his grace, wit me sende
To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage
That highte Jerusalem celestial. (I, 47-51)¹

To what extent is the work related to the motivating forces of an actual medieval pilgrimage, and to what degree does the medieval idea, discussed by Augustine, of life as a pilgrimage, shape Chaucer's creation?

In an actual pilgrimage and in the theological ideal, the first necessity, as the Parson points out, is penitence. "Penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne, and pyneth hymself for

he hath mysdoon' "(I, 84). While a search for spiritual renewal is implied in the General Prologue, in which the pilgrims are travelling to Canterbury "The hooly blisful martir for to seke" (A, 17), they show little penitence for the sins which they commit on the pilgrimage or for the sinful attitudes which are represented in their tales. Some pilgrims, the Miller and Reeve for example, seem completely insensitive to sin. A close study of the relationship of teller to tale shows that almost all the tales reflect the misconceptions and the vices of the tellers. Many of the themes dealt with in the tales concern various vices and their effects. The Seven Deadly Sins are amply exemplified. From the presence of this vice and sin rise the ideas of change as loss, and the pilgrims' desire for power or personal "privetee." Even the potentially positive concepts such as "gentillesse," "feith," "amor," and "honour" become perverted and illusory goods in many tales. At first appearance, the intent to pilgrimage seems to have little effect on the actions in the links and tales. In terms of the Parson's Tale, the pilgrims are guilty of " . . . three thynges in which we wratthe oure Lord Jhesu Crist:/ this is to seyn, by delit in thynkyng, by recchelessness in spekyng, and by wikked synful werkynge "(I, 109-10).

But we should question the aesthetic as well as the theological form that a medieval work of art meant to deal with pilgrimage might take. In a theological work such as Augustine's Of True Religion, the idea of life as a pilgrimage is represented in its ideal form. From this ideal perspective, the presence of sin is seen as a means of strengthening the

the Church, and ultimately as a part of the divine order.² A work of art which deals with sin, and which is not purely allegorical, must come into closer contact than does Augustine's work with sin as a human reality. Such is the case with the Canterbury Tales. The presence of sin is more important to the structure and meanings of the Tales than it is to the structure and meanings in a theological document such as Of True Religion. As has already been implied, the realm of action in the Tales is often at very serious odds with both the theological concept of life as pilgrimage and with the pilgrims' presumed desire for spiritual renewal. Furthermore, the format of the work as a group of tales linked by narrative and dialogue does not lend itself to a dramatic process of enlightenment in the pilgrims, or to an ordered progression, as Augustine's work is ordered, toward the highest good. The fact that the pilgrims do not seem penitent might suggest that the reader is the one meant to benefit by the pilgrims' bad example. But mere representation of vice is not equivalent to a representation of a process of pilgrimage. If the Canterbury Tales is to represent pilgrimage, there must be a motion within the work itself which is not dependent solely upon the pilgrims' actions and perceptions or upon the reader's benefit. This movement, whether by accumulation of concepts or by structuring according to the principles of medieval aesthetics, must be toward some order or stability analogous to the divine order of God.

Chaucer might have created a sense of progress by causing the pilgrims to exhibit penitence and to finally achieve some spiritual

insight. Another related development would be an increase in hope and faith. This might be represented by tales or dialogue which show faith in Christ as a redeemer to be stronger than the power of sin or the despair of the sinner. If we examine this possibility, we find that very little weight is given in the work as a whole to a true faith in Christ as redeemer. There are many instances of exclamations such as "Goddess mercy!" (E, 2419) which imply a belief in redemption, but these are used by the pilgrims in much the same tone and apparent seriousness as less holy interjections such as "'By armes, and by blood and bones, . . .'" (A, 3125) or "'Ha! ha!' quod he, ' for Cristes passion . . .'" (A, 4327). These are not articulations of faith, but rather illustrate the ironic lack thereof. Many tales conclude with a mention of Christ or God as redeemer, but in the Friar's and Pardoner's tales, for example, this conclusion contradicts the teller's attitudes and is not in accord with the general effect of the tale. Even tales of saints or martyrs, which should be statements of their teller's faith, do not function in this way. The Man of Law misconceives the operation of Christ in time and misunderstands the Christian concept of evil. The Physician's Tale is sordid. The Prioress exhibits some faith, but her tale is compromised by her worldly, lesser loves. She spends more time glorifying the martyr's death than glorifying God or Christ. In the last two tales, physical death seems more important to the tellers than does eternal life. In the whole of Canterbury Tales, only the Tale of Melibee, the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Second Nun's Tale, and the Parson's Tale imply or refer to the possibility of redemption. The nature of the Parson's Tale is predictable from, and consistent with,

the description of his character in the General Prologue. But since his tale is last, there is no means of determining its effects upon the pilgrims. In the Second Nun's Tale, redemption is effected more by direct divine intervention than by human penitence and hope. The emphasis in the Nun's Priest's Tale is also on miracle, although the idea of redemption is not as obvious on the literal level as it is in the Second Nun's Tale. But the Host's only reaction to the Nun's Priest's Tale is that it is "murie"; he clearly fails to understand the idea of the gift of grace, which is the fruit of the tale. The Tale of Melibee is more straightforward than any but the Parson's Tale. The bulk of the tale concerns Prudence's counselling, which, in the end, brings Melibee to recognize that God will "foryeven us oure giltes,/ and bryngen us to the blisse that nevere hath ende" (B², 3075-6). The understanding that Melibee gains leads him into the process of life as pilgrimage which will end in eternal bliss. For the reader, the tale is important not only because it is moved by human application of Christianity and not by a miracle, but for the fact that it is told by Chaucer the pilgrim. Had Chaucer the poet given his narrator only a fabliau or a tale showing confusions similar to those found in the Man of Law's Tale, he would have created a conflict between his representative and himself in his role of maker and controller of the work. Sir Thopas does not create such a conflict, because its value, from Chaucer the poet's perspective, is in its interruption. The poet is also more responsible than the narrator for the value of Melibee, but because the tale is an allegory and not a romance, any theological misconceptions on the part of the narrator

would throw doubt on Chaucer's intent and would dangerously confuse any attempts at the interpretation of the work as a whole. Chaucer's final choice of a moral tale for his narrator implies that the belief in salvation is important although it is not the "prime mover" of the work and that the process of pilgrimage is meant to be vital to the thematic and aesthetic development of the Canterbury Tales. But, as with the other tales, the effectiveness of Melibee is hindered by the pilgrims' lack of perception. The tale has no effect on the Host other than to make him happy that his wife did not hear it. Therefore, in relation to the pilgrims' understanding, the weight of the theme of hope and faith in redemption seems rather slight.

Because of the pilgrims' lack of penitence, hope and faith, the work cannot move in a clearly delineated process such as Augustine, in Of True Religion, describes. Here, the old man becomes the new man by learning the lessons of history, by going beyond human authority and human affairs, by marrying carnal appetite to strong reason and rejecting sin, by enduring in this state, by gaining peace and wisdom, and by passing into eternal life and gaining eternal beatitude.³ These steps are clearly beyond the vast majority of the pilgrims; they are steps whose prerequisite is penitence. In studying the Canterbury Tales for involvement in pilgrimage, we must look to the state before penitence. In order to be penitent, one must be aware of personal sin, and in order to do this, one must be sensitive to sin

and evil in general. Because of the medieval theological attitude toward evil, the presence of evil in the tales, even though it often seems to dominate, does not necessarily preclude the possibility that the work moves in a process of pilgrimage. Augustine tells us that evil is not a force opposing good as the Manicheans believed, but is the absence of the order which will lead an individual to God. "No life is evil as life but only as it tends to death. Life knows no death save wickedness [nequitas] which derives its name from nothingness [ne quidquam]." ⁴ So evil is restricted, and in essence, is nothing. In Augustinian terms, even the tendency toward nothingness has a place in God's order. Sinners are the chaff which protects the righteous, the wheat, on the threshing floor until the Last Judgment. Even the Devil is ultimately the servant of God. While evil alone is not enough to prevent pilgrimage, an insensitivity to evil as is displayed by the Miller and Reeve would be dangerous indeed. It is therefore part of the purpose of this study to examine the attitudes of the pilgrims toward evil and to study the effects of their involvement in sin upon the accumulation and interrelation of themes. It is neither necessary nor desirable to discuss the categories of sins in which the pilgrims are entangled, since this would lead only to the theological explanation of sins and not to an understanding of the functions of evil in the Canterbury Tales.

Although the roots of the study of the functions of the idea of evil are in the realm of the pilgrims' situation, the study necessarily proceeds to the higher perspective of Chaucer and of the reader, and to

a consideration of the functions of the idea of evil in the structure of the Canterbury Tales. It is possible, but not preferable, to examine the tales first from the reader's or Chaucer's perspective. This approach would necessitate beginning with theological and aesthetical abstractions, and assuming, for example, that Augustinian theology and some chosen amalgam of medieval aesthetic theories provide an adequate basis for explaining the intricacies of the Canterbury Tales. It is very difficult, as the bulk of Chaucer criticism illustrates, to determine the degree to which Chaucer's work is in accord with the various religious and aesthetic views of the medieval era, or of his period in particular. F. Tupper, for example, wrote a series of articles on sins and sinners in the Tales, using the theological categorization of the Seven Deadly Sins as a basis for interpreting the pilgrims and their actions.⁵ Even though the categorization of sins is a standard medieval practise, Tupper's approach does nothing to explain the work, but only emphasizes sin which is already obvious. Even interesting and perceptive criticism such as D.W. Robertson's, C. Muscatine's and R.M. Jordan's might be accused of forcing the interpretation of the Canterbury Tales to fit certain theological or aesthetic doctrines. Robertson tends to stress allegorical interpretation of medieval literature, including the Canterbury Tales, in terms of a dominant concept of caritas.⁶ Although this study will ultimately reach the conclusion that because the work is involved in a process of pilgrimage, it moves in accord with caritas, and so appear to follow Robertson's approach, nevertheless, the methods for reaching this conclusion will

be unlike Robertson's. Robertson discusses caritas as it is exemplified in allegorical interpretations of separate situations, tales, and works, and so treats the final meaning without considering the process which relates separate instances or tales, or which moves an entire work. This study must concentrate on action or process in order to explain the functions of the idea of evil and to show the involvement of the Tales in pilgrimage.

A basic part of Muscatine's and Jordan's approach is the study of the style and structure of the work by analogy with the structure of the Gothic cathedral and by examination of the aesthetics which produced it. All three of these approaches tend "to explain" the Canterbury Tales by discussing medieval aesthetics in general and by interpreting the surrounding literature and other art forms of the Middle Ages, rather than concentrating upon ideas and structures to be found in the work itself. By concentrating on the functions of the idea of evil, this study aims at avoiding conclusions about the theological direction of the work which the "earthy" content does not support and attempts to approach the significance of the structure of the work through elements contained within it, rather than through such external forms as the Gothic cathedral. It is therefore necessary to begin with the pilgrims' perspective. The main problem with this choice of approach is that some knowledge of medieval aesthetics and theology is essential to the study of any medieval work to prevent misinterpretation of the value of rhetoric, or to prevent the use of a modern approach to character study. In effect, in this study, the

principles of aesthetics and theology will be kept in mind throughout, but a strong attempt will also be made to resist forcing any interpretation to fit the structures provided by any theologian or artist.

It may be objected that "the aesthetic and theological functions of the idea of evil" is an unmanageably large and rather formless basis for a study. However, the ultimate purpose of this thesis - to comment upon the overall meanings of the Canterbury Tales - naturally requires a broad perspective. Furthermore, since evil and sin permeate the realm of action in the Tales, it seems more logical to concentrate on them than on the realm of intent, as Robertson has in effect done with his concentration on caritas. Finally, the statement of purpose assumes that the artistry and therefore the value of the Canterbury Tales lies in the expression of theological concepts in its particular aesthetic form. This thesis will examine the ways in which the theological idea of evil shapes and is in turn shaped by the aesthetic structure, and will attempt to show that a study of the functions of the idea of evil is a most fruitful and and significant means of understanding the meanings of the coordinate and juxtaposed themes and structures of the Canterbury Tales.

Before beginning the study proper, some explanation must be made for the choice of the term "evil." If we were working only on the pilgrims' level of perception, "sin" or "vice" would be equally appropriate terms. But since we are also dealing with Chaucer's perspective and the perspective from which the audience views the work,

and since the fourteenth century concept of evil, sin and vice arises from Christian theology, it is appropriate to turn to that theology for definition of the terms and clarification of the contexts in which they were used. For the purposes of this study, an understanding of the term "evil" begins with Augustine's Of True Religion. Augustine's work was chosen in preference to that of later theologians because his discussions of man, good and evil, and the process of moving toward salvation or damnation are lucid, and because Augustinian ideas served as a basis for many later theologians and still, in the fourteenth century, were an influential part of the Christian doctrine. Although theologians of the fourteenth century question Augustine's idea of ". . . an unbroken link from God's essence to His creatures,"⁷ that is, they question the extent of man's knowledge of the divine, the emphasis on faith rather than reason does not alter Augustine's idea that the evil or sin is not in that which the will desires, but is in man's misdirected will.⁸ The basis of the Christian concept of evil, stated so clearly by Augustine and carried through beyond the fourteenth century is that "there is no substantial evil . . . :"⁹ Vice and sin are actions of the free will which are evil because they move the soul away from the highest good. For Augustine, "evil" is a broader term than "sin" or "vice": "Vice in the soul arises from its own doing: and the moral difficulty that ensues from vice is the penalty which it suffers. That is the sum-total of evil."¹⁰ "Sin" and "vice" focus on specific actions; "evil" focuses on the action and its consequences. Augustine also states that wickedness ". . . derives its name from nothingness." In this context,

the theological idea of evil is manifest in medieval aesthetics. Because the Middle Ages conceived God's control as a perfect order of love and truth, they esteemed order in general and eschewed disorder. Part of the shaping of aesthetics by theology is accomplished by the already established relationship between medieval theology and aesthetics, quite independent of the Canterbury Tales. In choosing the term "evil," we wish to bring to mind the idea of the action and the immediate and ultimate penalty, and also to evoke the concept of disorder or nothingness which will facilitate discussion of the aesthetic as well as the theological functions of the idea of evil.

The presence of evil in the Canterbury Tales has many effects on the structure which are not directly related to the idea of evil as it is theologically conceived. Evil partially accounts for the variety of perspectives in the Tales, and perspective is a structural as well as thematic concern. In the fallen world of the Tales, men are moved more by lesser loves than by the illumination of divine love. Their perspectives therefore vary according to the love which moves them: the Knight loves "Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie" (A, 46) as it exists in reference to the courtly ideals of knighthood; the Wife loves sensual pleasure and is moved by it; the Clerk loves logic and philosophy. Since these are lesser loves, they bind the lovers within an order which is less than perfect: for example, the Canon's Yeoman's love of alchemy, which is a sinful desire for personal power, binds him within a fruitless and endless mutabilitas. In this tale, as well as in several others where the pilgrims' restricted

understandings prevent them from dealing with the problems contained in or raised by their tales, the limited understanding is reflected in the structure of the tale. The presence of evil also gives rise to a complex of situations concerning man's perception of change as loss and such symptoms of sin as "quitting," blindness and drunkenness. Some of these situations interrelate in such a way as to help give the idea of evil an aesthetic shape.

One possible paradox in studying the shaping or interpretation of the theological idea of evil in a work of art is that while in theology evil signifies certain actions and consequences, and in more abstract terms means disorder or nothingness, in a work of art it must be represented in words just as the idea of good is represented. From the medieval point of view, it is far easier to see the effects of God's order in substantial things. One has only to look at any created being and to believe that qua being it partakes of the highest good. Because of the relationship of theology to medieval aesthetics, order and disorder in a work of art would logically be linked with order and disorder in theology. Therefore any tale or work of art which shows confusion of ideas or is developed in a manner contrary to the standards of rhetoric, becomes representative of disorder or formlessness. Thus, in several of Chaucer's tales, disorder or formlessness is the shape of the tale. To use other terms, that which is without substance is expressed in substance. This means that though evil is not conceived of as a force in theological terms, it may operate as a force in the aesthetic structure.

CHAPTER II

THE PILGRIMS' PERCEPTION OF EVIL

Having established a general definition of the theological idea of evil from the perspective of Augustine and of the audience, we must return to the Canterbury Tales to examine the concept or concepts of evil held by the pilgrims. In this examination, and throughout the study, little reference will be made to interpretations of tales and pilgrims offered by other critics. To the best of the present writer's knowledge, there is no other study of the Canterbury Tales which centres directly on the problem of evil.¹ Because this study undertakes to comment upon the overall meanings of the Tales, and therefore works from a different perspective than does an article which centres on a particular tale, mention of sin or evil in such an article is often irrelevant to this study's concerns.² Furthermore, because of the scope of the study, it is impossible to explain and then to refute each critical opinion which differs from the interpretation offered in this work. The need to show the development of the concept of evil and to illustrate its functions necessitates at least a brief mention of every tale. Including other critical opinions, especially since they are seldom more than remotely related to this study, would only detract from the continuity of the exploration of the thesis.

The Canterbury Tales opens in a spirit of joy. Spring and

pilgrimage both imply spiritual renewal. No mention is made of sin or evil or penitence; the Canterbury pilgrims travel only in thanksgiving "The hooly blisful martir for to seke,/ That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke" (A, 17-18). Why, then, is so little of this initial joy echoed in the prologues, and endlinks, and tales? Even in the remainder of the General Prologue, there is little emphasis on evil. The narrator makes many adverse comments about the pilgrims which indicate their shortcomings, but he inevitably concludes that, in spite of their faults, they are all noble or gentle or kind.

In Group A the pilgrims exhibit little awareness of evil. Since the character of the Knight is not revealed by dialogue preceding his tale, and since the tale itself is removed from Christian terminology, little can be said about his awareness of evil. If it is similar to that found in his tale, it is not at all a Christian awareness. Within the tale, Fortune, Theseus, and various dieties act with arbitrary and adverse effects upon various characters. Neither Arcite's mention of "yvele pleye" (A, 1127), which is in reference to a breach of the rules of courtly love, nor Palamon's complaint against evil Fortune, are meaningful in terms of a Christian concept of evil, which regards evil as beginning with a sinner's evil will. As Saturn's speech (A, 2453ff) indicates, "evil" in the Knight's Tale is an arbitrary malefic force for which the individual it affects is not responsible.

The insensitivity to a Christian concept of evil continues in the exchange between the Miller and Reeve. In the Miller's Prologue

the Reeve protests:

Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotry.
It is a synne and eek a greet folye
To apeyren any man, or hym defame, (A, 3145-7)

yet in his own Prologue and Tale, he commits the same sin in "quiting" the Miller. The Reeve is of course sensitive to other men's sins, but his own statement about the Miller - "He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke,/ But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke" (A, 3919-20) - applies equally well to himself. This readiness to recognize misdeeds of others and to ignore one's own is the same position the narrator takes in commenting upon the Miller and Reeve:

For Goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
of yvele entente . . .
.
The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
So was the Reve eek and othere mo,
And harlotrie they tolden bothe two. (A, 3172-3,
3182-4)

This comment does not necessarily refer to the spiritual state of the narrator, who, because he represents Chaucer, is more a malleable tool than a character, but rather is indicative of the state of mind of the pilgrims in Group A. Both the Miller's and Reeve's tales are replete with sins: cupiditas, violence, lust, and deception. But since no moral judgments are made by either teller, and since there is humor and a certain "justice" in the tales' conclusions, the sin is not emphasized and may go almost unnoticed by the pilgrims and even by the reader on his first reading. The Cook's Tale promises to follow the same pattern. While the Miller and Reeve do not recognize personal guilt, and while their tales put minimal emphasis on sin, their angry quarrel cannot be unnoticed by the pilgrims. It is this

emotion of anger, expressed in various ways by pilgrims in Groups A to C in the Ellesmere order, which detracts from the sense of joy and thanksgiving inherent in the opening lines of the General Prologue.

The Man of Law's Tale contains the first attempted treatment of the Christian idea of evil. It is the most confused attempt in all the tales: because of this it stands closer to the Knight's Tale in its concept of evil than to any other. As Chauncey Wood notes, "The Man of Law . . . is more than just another storyteller among the Canterbury pilgrims; he is an interpreter. . . ." ³ And according to Wood, the Man of Law's interpretations of Innocent's statements on poverty, of the operation of God in relation to human affairs, of the effects of the malefic horoscope, and of the quotation from Bernard Silvestris, are all misinterpretations. ⁴ The Man of Law conceives of both good and evil as outside, arbitrary forces. He first names the malefic aspect of the planets as the cause of ill, then later throughout the tale refers to evil personified in the Sultaness, the knight, Donegild, and the lord's steward. There are more references suggesting the force of hellish depravity in this tale than in any other. We are told that the Sultan's mother is a "welle of vices" (B¹, 323) and the "roote of iniquitee" (B¹, 358), that the knight attempts his misdeeds "thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns" (B¹, 598), and that Donegild is a "feendlych spirit" (B¹, 783). Even Custance, in mentioning the "feendes snare" (B¹, 571), refers to evil as a force. Alla strengthens his oath with "Elles the feend me fecche out of this

place" (B¹, 1064). Although the Man of Law's conception of Christ as a "strong champion" (B¹, 635) who has "boond Sathan" (B¹, 634) represents on one hand a familiar medieval means of describing Christ and implies the Augustinian idea of evil as bondage and restriction; on the other hand, when it is combined with so many other references to both good and evil as personified and mechanically forceful qualities, it tends to add emphasis to the view of evil as force which Augustine regards as heretical. In sum, the Man of Law exhibits a complete misunderstanding of all the aspects of Christian doctrine which he treats. The other misunderstandings do not directly relate to the idea of evil. It will suffice to say that they are as heretical as the Man of Law's Manichean concept of evil.

The remainder of the tales will be discussed in the order found in the Ellesmere MS. The Ellesmere order will be followed not merely because it is convenient to this particular study of the idea of evil, but because it is the only order which is viable if the idea of pilgrimage is to be any more than a literal frame, and if the structure is not to violate the thematic developments in the tales. Elaboration of reasons for this choice will not be necessary once the functions of evil have been discussed from the higher perspective of the reader.

To some extent, Group D, including the Wife of Bath's, the Friar's and the Summoner's tales, repeats the pattern found in Group A. While the Wife's Prologue is of her personal experience and the Knight's Tale is not, each is consistent with the strong personal

commitments of the teller which are outlined in the General Prologue. The Wife also echoes Theseus' words: "Ther nedeth noght noon auctoritee t'allegge,/ For it is preeved by experience" (A, 2999-3000). The parallel between the quarrels of the Miller and Reeve and the Friar and Summoner is obvious. As critics, we should question Chaucer's purpose in repeating this pattern and, in relation to the pilgrims' awareness of evil, we should ask whether Group D illustrates a change in this awareness. A third question which will be dealt with later is whether or not the emphasis on evil is more pronounced here, and whether there is a corresponding change in the reader's awareness of evil in the tales.

The Wife's awareness of evil intent, act and penalty is rather hard to define. She sees any man's attempt to dominate her as wrong, but she does not see her own harshness in the same light. She stoutly maintains her right to many marriages and openly proclaims her sensual nature. In her awareness of increasing age and in her increasingly desperate means of winning husbands,⁵ she may feel the effect of her sinful love of sensuality, but it is very unlikely that she sees her restless lot as the result of her involvement in a lesser good. In beginning her defence of multiple marriages, she refers to the Scriptural authority of both the Old and New Testaments. That she can use only the Old to support her case and that she does not understand the New are indications that she is involved in an "olde daunce" both physically and spiritually.⁶ In the midst of a self-description in which she explains that her nature is influenced by the

position of Venus and Mars in her natal horoscope, the Wife exclaims: "Allas! allas! that evere love was synne! (D, 614). She perceives that love may be sinful, but she seems compelled to involve herself in sensual love nevertheless. Because the Wife does not understand a love higher than the sensual, she is caught in her restricted perception. It is fruitless for the reader to regard her restriction as willful. The Wife is more accurately viewed as a character representing an imperfect balance between the lesser good of worldly love and the highest good of caritas. Her mention of the planets' positions has two effects: first, it indicates that she believes the planets have determined her nature and so indicates her lack of awareness of Providence, and second, because she is not equipped to change her view, it helps to establish her character as fixed. Chaucer deliberately limits the perception of the pilgrims, especially those in Groups A to C, making it impossible for them to perceive evil clearly, in Augustinian terms. This should only indicate to the reader that the pilgrims are not meant to be seen as characters who reveal their innermost thoughts or who develop in any way, but as vehicles for the expression of various themes and conditions which can only properly be viewed from the reader's or Chaucer's perspective.⁷

On the pilgrims' level, two points of contrast may be noted between the Friar's and Summoner's and Miller's and Reeve's quarrels. Both relate to a change in the pilgrims' sensitivity to sin. In the Friar's Prologue, the Host objects to the Friar's baiting the Summoner.

. . . "A! sire, ye sholde be hende
 And curteys, as a man of youre estaat;
 In compaignye we wol have no debaat.
 Telleth youre tale, and lat the Somonour be."

(D, 1286-89)

In the Miller's Prologue he remains silent. Secondly, both the Friar and the Summoner are officers of the Church, not "cherls" like the Miller and Reeve, and should therefore be more aware of the sins they are guilty of, one in baiting and the other in "quiting". Although both tales are bawdy like the Miller's and Reeve's, they are much more closely concerned with sin. The sin, however, is still only recognized if it is another man's vice.

There is very little evidence in either Groups E or F to show that the tellers of these tales are aware of personal sin or are aware, as in the case of the Merchant, that the unhappiness they experience may be the result of a personal evil intention or act. The Clerk questions briefly the morality of Walter's temptation of Griselda. Other than this, the only evil which is recognized in the tales is that of problems in marriage.

The Physician's Tale is simply a very ugly tale. Chaucerian irony is evident in the situation in which Virginius must resort to murder in order to preserve the desirable worldly quality of virginity and innocence. That the Physician can tell such a tale implies that he is not only insensitive to the moral magnitude of the sin Virginius commits, but that he also has very little appreciation for the "good" of life through which state man may move in pilgrimage. The Pardoner's Tale, which illustrates a changed attitude toward the idea of evil, is

also very negative. Whereas the other pilgrims are insensitive to their own sins and aware of other men's, the Pardoner is not only aware of his sin, but takes a perverse pride in it. Although one might argue validly that he cannot be aware of the magnitude of the evil in which he is enmeshed and still remain proud within it, he definitely shows an awareness of personal sin which the tellers of the previous tales lacked. The Pardoner's significance is double: he himself is an example of utter perversion, but he also tells the first really moral tale which offers directly a positive lesson. The closing exchange between the Pardoner, Host, and Knight is likewise dichotomous. The Host reacts with great hostility to a personal threat. He accuses the Pardoner of being an angry man, but is apparently oblivious to the anger in his own vitriolic outburst which immediately precedes the accusation. Conversely, the Knight adopts a tone of arbitration. This exchange contains the strongest negative expression of feeling thus far; the Host speaks directly to the Pardoner, whereas the Reeve's and Summoner's attacks in their respective prologues are spoken to the Host and refer to the person attacked in the third person. Yet the Knight's effort represents the most positive type of interaction between the pilgrims to this point; he attempts to reconcile the Host and Pardoner, whereas the Host merely criticized and suppressed the Summoner.

In the tales which have been discussed thus far, different levels of awareness of the idea of evil and different levels of moral awareness may be observed in the pilgrims. The Knight exhibits no

awareness of the Christian concept of evil in his tale. Because the Christian context is absent, there is no means for the individual to relate to whatever forces are seen to control Creation, other than to simply accept them.⁸ The individual has no moral responsibility for events, even if they are moved through the Great Chain of love which Theseus describes (A, 2987-3016). From the pilgrims' perspective, the Miller's and Reeve's insensitivity to evil detracts from the effectiveness of their tales as moral exempla. Although the Miller makes an example of the carpenter's cupiditas, he is in sympathy with Nicholas and Alison, and does not use the presence of the same sin in them for a moral purpose. Because he does not condemn cupiditas in general, his tale does nothing to sharpen the pilgrims' perception of sin. The Man of Law misunderstands the operation of Christian grace in time and misrepresents evil as a force. Although the pilgrims involved do not understand their situation, the tales of Group D and, to an even greater extent, those of Groups E and F, show the confusing and adverse effects which result from the pursuit of lesser goods. At the same time, the presence of ecclesiastical figures such as the Friar and Summoner, and their natural use of tales dealing with Church officers and their sins, puts more emphasis on the presence of and the problem of evil. The pilgrims of Group E-F are involved with or in illusions, but they have no apparent awareness of this. The moral value of their tales is likewise questionable, as in the case of the Clerk's, or illusory as in the case of the Franklin's. Both the Physician's and the Pardoner's tales expose evil in its ugliest forms. The lesson of

the Pardoner's Tale seems to be that only when there is an awareness of personal sin can there be a corresponding awareness of good. As the Host's reaction shows, the Pardoner has made the pilgrims aware of his own fatal cupiditas; yet he has also offered them a sound moral warning against that cupiditas. In one sense the tales preceding the Pardoner's exhibit evil in progressively more deadly intention, actions and effects. Because the presence of evil becomes more and more apparent, it becomes impossible to ignore. And once the presence of evil is acknowledged, the presence of good is also acknowledged. It is to this point that the Pardoner's Tale brings the pilgrims. Given a theological perspective, it is possible to move toward the highest good from this point in a fallen world. To determine whether or not the Canterbury Tales takes this direction, we must continue the examination of the pilgrims' attitudes toward the idea of evil in the remainder of the tales.

The Shipman's Tale is noticeably lighter than the majority of the preceding tales; in tone it is reminiscent of the Miller's or Reeve's tale. In an alternate ordering, the Shipman's Tale is placed after the Man of Law's Tale,⁹ so that the epilogue to the Man of Law's Tale, which in some MSS mentions the shipman, will logically precede the Shipman's Tale. If we assumed this order, we could say that the Shipman's attitude in the Man of Law's Epilogue shows his dislike of being reminded of moral duty and implies that he probably does not wish to recognize his sins. This picture of the Shipman would be consistent with his portrait in the General Prologue. This order has some positive

aspects and may have been Chaucer's original order, but in terms of the development of the thematic and aesthetic structure of the Canterbury Tales, it raises impossible difficulties. If we place the Shipman's Tale after the Man of Law's, the tales of Group B², which is a recognized unit, must precede those of Groups D, E, F and C. Although only the pilgrims' perception has been discussed in the tales of Groups A to C in the Ellesmere order, some unifying interrelationships among the tales and some change and development in the idea of evil have been noted. That it is aesthetically and thematically destructive to break this group by inserting Group B² after the Man of Law's Tale will become much more apparent upon examination of the tales from the reader's perspective. In attempts to determine the best order for the Shipman's Tale and Group B², the greatest problems are textual.¹⁰ The line "He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye" (B², 12) indicates that the Shipman's Tale was originally intended for a woman, presumably the Wife of Bath. Whether the Man of Law's epilogue was meant to precede the present Shipman's Tale or some other tale previously assigned to him, we cannot know. The manuscripts are no help. Although approximately two-thirds of them retain the Man of Law's epilogue, in the majority of the relatively complete MSS, it is not the Wife's or Shipman's tale which follows, but the Squire's.¹¹ In such a case as this, where the text is confused, it seems justifiable to ignore the confusion and to follow whatever order seems most compatible to the overall design and movement of the work.

Although the Shipman's Tale by itself in the Ellesmere order tells us nothing about the attitude toward evil, the tales of Group B² collectively provide evidence for a very important change. The Prioress's prologue indicates at least a familiarity with the concept of God as the highest good, of Christ as redeemer, and of Mary as one who intercedes on man's behalf. Whatever the Prioress's personal conflict may be between her desire to follow the highest good and her actual love of lesser goods, she does, in words at least, express a general awareness of man's sin and recognizes the need for men to be penitent and to receive grace. She prays:

Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable
That, of his mercy, God so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplie,
For reverence of his mooder Marie. (B², 687-90)

If the remainder of the tales in the Ellesmere order show a similar awareness of evil and of what is morally good in Christian terms, there is no need to examine them on the same terms as the tales of Groups A to C were examined. It will be more profitable to try and determine if the awareness of evil is accompanied by or results in any other changes in the pilgrims' attitudes. This can best be done by comparing the tellers of the Group B² tales with the tellers of the previous tales. The Prioress, for example, appears humble and submissive when compared with the aggressive Wife of Bath. She speaks of herself as having the strength and understanding of a year-old child, and thereby figures her innocence and inexperience. Conversely, the Wife takes pride in her experience and her knowledge of the

"olde daunce." It does not even matter on the level of the pilgrims' perception that the Prioress may be proud of her innocence and may so be deceiving herself. All that is important for the moment is the statement of innocence and humility.

By continuing this type of comparison, it soon becomes evident that the pilgrims in Groups A to C are, to varying degrees, more interested in a selfish, personal power than are the pilgrims of Group B². The Miller overrides the Host's request for a tale from the Monk because he wishes to ". . . quite the Knyghtes tale" (A, 3127). Since millers and carpenters are traditional rivals, ¹² the Miller's decision to tell a bawdy tale about a carpenter in the presence of the Reeve, who is a carpenter, may be seen as aggressive. The Reeve's predictable reply is an attempt to save himself by harming the Miller. Even the characters within these two tales are moved by competition and the need for revenge. The Wife's self-interest, which has already been mentioned, is best seen from the conclusion of her tale:

. . . and Jhesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fressh abedde,
And grace t'overbyde hem that we wedde;
And eek I praye Jhesu shorte hir lyves
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
And olde and angry nygardes of dispence,
God sende hem soone verray pestilence! (D, 1258-64)

The Friar and Summoner assert themselves in aggression and revenge. The Squire and Franklin use their tales to exhibit their personal competence in rhetoric. The Pardoner not only flaunts his base motives for preaching and pardoning, but, in trying to persuade the

pilgrims to take pardon from him, seeks to bind not just one individual as do the Miller and Friar, but to draw all the pilgrims into his power.

The tellers of the tales of Group B² and the characters within the tales operate differently. The Prioress has already been contrasted to the Wife. She praises Mary; she does not attempt to gain power over the other pilgrims or to exhibit her learning. Chaucer the narrator, who follows the Prioress with Sir Thopas and the Tale of Melibee, is likewise an innocuous figure. He does not use either Sir Thopas, a tale so shallow that it may be Chaucer the poet's parody of a courtly romance, or Melibee, "a moral tale vertuous" (B², 2130), for any observable aggressive or selfish purpose. In Melibee, Prudence's efforts are not selfishly directed but are intended to save Melibee from his anger and help him to regain wisdom. Whereas the characters in the tale of Groups A to C do not offer help to one another in a Christian manner, the characters in Group B² do. Mary, Prudence, and even the multitude who chase the fox in the Nun's Priest's Tale are opposing manifestations of evil.

The Monk's Tale illustrates the teller's apparent lack of awareness that faith in Christ's redemption of man and in the gift of God's grace obviates the need to discuss as tragedy most of the examples he uses. In spite of the Monk's misunderstanding, he is considerably more serious in his choice of a tale than the Host expects. Even if the tale itself is static and does not move toward an understanding of the Christian remedy for evil, it provides

Chaucer with an opportunity to show a changed perception in the Knight. For the first time, a tale is interrupted because its content is useless. The Franklin's interruption of the Squire seems to be based not on rational criticism of the tale, but on unspoken personal reasons. Boredom appears to be the Host's reason for interrupting the narrator's Sir Thopas. In the latter, however, there is some suggestion that the Host also objects to the narrator's lack of poetic ability. He says:

Myne eres aken of thy drasty speche.
 Now swich a rym the devel I biteche!
 This may wel be rym dogerel,

 Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!
 (B², 2113-5, 2120)

Together, the Host's and Knight's interruptions indicate a new ability to judge the worth of tales according to some basic aesthetic or moral principles.

The Nun's Priest's Tale is the only tale thus far which is related for the purpose of providing the pilgrims and readers with a moral exemplum. Because the Nun's Priest says "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (B², 4633), his tale has more chance of benefitting the pilgrims than does one in which the presence of a moral is not pointed out. In doing this, the Priest exhibits a more personal and active involvement in Christian virtue than any pilgrim but the Parson.

All that has been discussed to this point is the pilgrims' awareness of the Christian idea of evil and some of the effects of

this awareness as they occur in Group B². It should now be evident, however, that even in the confused and limited perception of the pilgrims, there is a change of attitude, tone and direction between Groups A to C, and Group B². It was necessary to discuss the pilgrims' awareness of the change because it is the one change which is vital to the theological and aesthetic movement of the Tales. It is not necessary to continue any further on the pilgrims' level of perception. Because the pilgrims' perspective is limited, we cannot fully discuss the theological functions of the idea of evil, or even begin to discuss the relation of the idea of evil to the aesthetics, until we shift to the artist's or reader's perspective.

CHAPTER III

THE READER'S PERSPECTIVE

The reader's perception of the emphasis upon the idea of evil includes but extends far beyond the pilgrims' perceptions. Presumably, the reader comes to the work with some knowledge of medieval theology and therefore with a certain expectation that because of the frame of the pilgrimage the work will instruct as well as delight. If the reader expects allegory or a distinctly didactic work, his preconception is shattered first by the narrator's description of the pilgrims and more thoroughly by the tales of Group A. He soon becomes aware of the limitation of the narrator's perception. Too many pilgrims of questionable character are described in the General Prologue as "good fellows." The Knight's Tale is important simply because it is the first; it disorientates the reader from the idea of pilgrimage, which is established in the first lines of the General Prologue.¹ It represents a pagan world in which conflicting powers operate amorally, without reference to good or evil. The only solution for an individual in this world is "To maken vertu of necessitee" (A, 3042). In Egeus' speech to Theseus concerning Arcite's death, the old man says:

"This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we been pilgrymes, passynge to and fro.
Deeth is an ende of every worldly soore."

(A, 2847-9)

Egeus offers an explanation of life and death which contains a mention

of pilgrimage, but which is ironically non-Christian. There is no moral purpose in life, no direction in the pilgrims' passing, and no eternal "joye after wo" (A, 2841). Death seen as the end of woe is not equivalent to death seen as the beginning of salvation and benediction. Because life is only understood as "wo," there can be no perception of moral good and evil. Although the reader becomes aware of evil much more quickly than do the pilgrims, he is forced by the nature of the tales of Group A to begin almost at their "zero" level of awareness. Only later, when he understands the movement of the tales toward a Christian concept of evil, can he see fully the inadequacy of Theseus' solution in a Christian world.

The confusion in the Man of Law's Tale indicates to the reader not a specific sin but a general movement away from Christian truth. The reader should be warned by both the vehemence and misunderstanding evident in the Man of Law's attack on poverty that this pilgrim does not understand or live according to Christian doctrine. He completely misses the idea that it is spiritual, not physical, poverty to which the scripture he quotes refers. In recognizing the confusions in this tale, the reader recognizes the presence of evil. Chaucer's choice of a saint's legend in which to misinterpret the operation of grace and the nature of evil is particularly effective. Such a tale, properly told, should inspire humility and piety. By conceiving of God as a mechanical force, the Man of Law simplifies the mysterious and "privee" operation of God's grace and so misinterprets a doctrine basic to Christian belief. The tale can therefore have little positive

effect. The fact that the pilgrims do not object to the Man of Law's misrepresentation of God's "privetee" makes their own attempts at "privetee" more predictable. The conception of God as a mechanical hand does not inspire fear or humility and so does nothing to dissuade man from pride in his own meager knowledge and ability. With the Man of Law's Tale, the reader begins to perceive that if there is any movement in the tales to this point, it is counter to and not in accord with a process of pilgrimage.

The Wife of Bath's most recognizable sin is her love of the lesser good of sensuality. This in turn causes her to be proud and to usurp the man's role of dominance in marriage. Her desire for power is a manifestation of man's attempted "privetee" and so is evil. The reader is made to recognize the faults and limitations in the Wife's situation in several ways. First, her desire for dominance is, in terms of tradition, "up so down."² Secondly, there is a quality of uneasiness or restlessness in the Wife which causes the reader to question her arguments. The idea that her application of sovereignty may not have been as successful as she would have the pilgrims believe is supported by her explanation of her marriage to Jankyn. She builds Jankyn's character in a hundred line account and indicates that he was a man who thought that nagging and dominant wives caused nothing but evil. There is absolutely no preparation or explanation for her statement that Jankyn suddenly changed from a dominant to a subordinate figure. Because of the incredibility of this statement, the Wife's arguments lose credence in the reader's

perception. The limitations of her power become more evident. Through her Prologue and Tale the reader is made to realize that while sensual love is a good, it is not a good upon which one can safely base one's life. Its effect is evil because it prevents the Wife from rising above earthly concerns.

The worth of the Friar's Tale in contributing to the reader's awareness of evil is far greater than that of the Miller's or Reeve's. It points more clearly than any tale thus far to the individual evil intent, rather than the sinful action itself, as the damning factor. Both the friar and the carter curse, but the carter is not punished because his intent in cursing is not evil. The reader's recognition of this fact forces him to see the Friar's and Summoner's quarrel as caused by evil intent rather than merely being a forgivable altercation. It imposes the same serious tone upon the Miller's and Reeve's quarrel. This is one of the fascinating aspects of the Canterbury Tales: that each understanding the reader gains from a particular tale changes the perspective from which he views both the tales to follow and the preceding tales. Many of the functions of the idea of evil are not apparent at the outset, but once they have been recognized at a particular point, that point becomes a centre from which the function may be traced both forwards and backwards in the order of the tales.

In the Friar's Tale, the importance of intent is made clear through a focusing on words.³ The ironic use of "feith" and "trouthe" helps the reader to begin to see how the theological concepts of good

and evil can be given force by the aesthetic means of expression. The words are wrenched from their proper place and made to serve evil purposes. They do not merely describe evil; they become part of the evil itself. Words turn the theological concept of evil as nothingness into a force which takes shape as part of the aesthetic structure. Because evil is so apparent in the Canterbury Tales, it necessarily influences the shape in which the ideas and themes of the work appear. Chaucer's recognition of the power of the word may be one means of understanding the reason for his Retraction.

The Summoner's Tale also deals with words, in this case the insincere words of the friar. By analogy with the noisesome fart, the friar's hollow rhetoric is given a shape which can be appreciated by the senses as well as by the intellect. One hollow sound is just reward for another. Because both the Friar's and Summoner's intent in attacking one another is evil, their tales are devoid of good purpose and may also be equated with the fart.

The concept of evil which the reader gains from the tales of Groups E and F is that of evil as a false paradise, constructed, especially in the case of the Clerk's and Franklin's tales, by words. Once the reader has recognized the faults in the tales, he can see the illusions created by them to be as undesirable as the fart which represents the friar's sinful words. The Clerk, whose love is logic, tells a tale which is an apparent counter to the Wife's contention that wives should have sovereignty.⁴ But the Clerk cannot completely accept

Walter's "wicked usage" (E, 785) which motivates the events of the tale, and in his closing lines suggests that everyone, including wives, should be constant in adversity. Furthermore, the Envoy, which opposes the idea of submission in the tale, shows that the Clerk's words only reverse but do not solve the problem. One side of the argument is as valid as the other. A theologian's answer to this situation would be that since the Clerk relies on his knowledge of words and argument rather than upon the principles of love of God and love of neighbor for God as a basis for establishing harmony between individuals, he is bound to fail. Although the Clerk does not will evil as the Friar and Summoner do, evil functions in the use of a lesser good to supplant a higher. The impact of this function upon the reader should be considerable. In the previous cases of the Wife, Friar, and Summoner, the specific sins as categorized by the Church are easily recognizable. The logic which the Clerk uses is part of man's reason, which is supposedly the faculty which helps man to move toward God. Just as Walter misuses his reason in forcing Griselda into temptation, so the Clerk does likewise in choosing such a tale to answer the Wife's. The Clerk fails to resolve his tale satisfactorily and fails to use his reason to move his listeners to an understanding of harmony based on Christian principles. The failure of logic should emphasize for the reader the truly humble position of man. When the need for humility becomes apparent, all the pilgrims' sins of pride, however small, take on more serious meanings in the reader's perception.

In the Merchant's Tale the false paradise takes the shape of Januarie's garden. Januarie hopes to counteract time with the stability of marriage, but since his love is cupiditas, it betrays his hopes. Evil is present in the mirror of Januarie's mind, which, instead of reflecting the idea of Christian love, reflects only his lust for the material world:

Heigh fantasy and curious bisynesse
 Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse
 Of Januarie about his mariage.
 Many a fair shap and many a fair visage
 Ther passeth thurgh his herte nyght by nyght
 As whoso tokke a mirour polisshed bryght,
 And sette it in a commune market place,
 Thanne shold he se ful many a figure pace
 By his mirour (E, 1577-85)

As in the Clerk's Tale, the lesser good of marriage functions as evil first because the marriage relationship itself is misconceived, and secondly because love of wife is substituted as an ordering principle in place of love of God.

In relation to the process of pilgrimage, only an indirect warning through Canacee's falcon against the deceptive and illusory nature of worldly love can be gained from the Squire's Tale. Thematically, it retires into the safe and magical realm of romance; aesthetically, it meanders formlessly on until the Franklin's interruption. Although it is unclear as to how the pilgrims perceive the tale, the reader may rightfully see it as a false paradise of romance and rhetoric which, because it represents a state of idleness in the process of pilgrimage, is to be regarded as tending toward nothingness, and therefore as evil.

Because the Franklin makes no judgments as the Clerk did upon the actions of his characters and because the Franklin's Tale has a "happy" ending, it has been regarded by Kittredge as the resolution of the Marriage Group.⁵ He holds that there is a balance of sovereignty between Arveragus and Dorigen and that the "gentillesse" shown in the releasing of Dorigen and Aurelius from promises is an illustration of desirable harmony in human affairs. But Kittredge does not really question the initial relationship which the Franklin sets up between Arveragus and Dorigen. The agreement is that Arveragus will remain a knight following Dorigen's will and take only the "name of soveraynetee" (F, 751) instead of the true sovereignty of a medieval husband. In leaving Dorigen "To seke in armes worshipe and honour" (F, 811), Arveragus continues to play the knight, not the husband. Dorigen steps outside their agreement and acts as a wife first by being faithful to Arveragus and secondly by asking his advice. He breaks the agreement by ordering her to keep her word, and in this order still acts as a knight rather than a husband. Because he believes that truth as an abstract courtly concept is more important than "truth" in marriage, it is difficult to believe that this relationship is meant to represent a real marriage.⁶ He would uphold the word rather than the intent and commit the same sin which the summoner in the Friar's Tale is guilty of.

The tale moves around illusion. Just as the representation of the marriage is an illusion, so the removal of the rocks and the final resolution of the problems are illusions. In both thematic and

aesthetic terms, the Franklin's solution is magic because it dismisses such important problems as fidelity in marriage and the relationship of promise and debt, or word and intent, with a very superficial sort of "nobility." Alan T. Gaylord equates the "gentillesse" shown in the tale with the idea of freedom operating in a courtly manner. Arveragus is "fre" in allowing Dorigen sovereignty, Dorigen is "fre" in making the promise to Aurelius, Arveragus is again "fre" in giving away his wife's honor, and Aurelius is "fre" in giving it back.⁷ Responding in a courtly manner, they all "make a virtue of necessity." But their response to their situation is not virtuous in a Christian sense because the "necessity" is of their own sinful creation. This is one of the instances in the tales which shows that "making virtue of necessity" is not an adequate Christian response. The knight in the Wife's tale makes a like choice in giving in to his old and ugly wife. The Physician sees Virginus' choice and action in the same light. But neither the courtly "gentillesse" of the knight nor the moral freedom of Virginus are Christian qualities. In relation to courtly actions such as those in the Wife's or Franklin's tales, the reader might be tempted to echo the Host's words: "'Straw for youre gentillesse!'" (F, 695).

The impact of the tales of Groups E and F upon the reader should be great precisely because the evil here is in a more insidious and therefore more dangerous form than in the previous tales. In the Miller's and Reeve's tales, there is little concerning the actions of the characters which deserves praise. By contrast, the tales of

Groups E and F concern "goods" with which the medieval Christian and aesthetician lived and worked. Yet in these last tales, marriage, logic, and rhetoric are vehicles for the expression of the idea of evil. These tales pervert potential "goods" by offering them as principles of basic thematic ordering rather than seeking a thematic base in the order inherent in the highest good. Because the tales of Groups E and F exhibit this fault to a greater degree than do the Wife's, Friar's and Summoner's tales, they should be more effective in increasing the reader's awareness of the subtle functions of evil.

Group C represents a shift back to a very overt expression of evil. The evil in the Physician's Tale is completely unmitigated by the kind of divine intervention manifest in the Prioress's or the Second Nun's tales. The attitude toward death is almost the same as that in the Knight's and the Man of Law's tales. Death is made necessary because of the operation of an evil force for which the individual has no responsibility. Death is evil in the paradoxical situation where the only means Virginius sees of "preserving" Virginia's innocence is to kill her. The manifestation of worldly virtue which is perceived only in terms of physical virginity must be destroyed to ensure its safety from corruption. Ultimately, here, death is the remedy for life. The Physician's moral "Forsaketh synne, er synne yow forsake" (C, 286) is no remedy for Virginia's loss. The Physician is still operating on a level of perception which the reader long left behind. In the tales of Groups A to C, the increasing disparity between

the pilgrims' and the reader's awareness of evil makes the pilgrims' lack of Christian understanding and purpose more and more intolerable.

Like the Physician's moral, the Pardoner's "Radix malorum est cupiditas" (C, 334) is painfully true, yet also ineffectual in terms of the main character, in this case the Pardoner himself. As Robert Miller notes in his article on Chaucer's Pardoner, the Pardoner is a eunuch of the worst kind. As the antithesis of the man who cuts himself off from the world so that he may be spiritually whole, the Pardoner cuts himself off from all spiritual good in order to satisfy his cupiditas.⁸ From the reader's perspective, the Pardoner's Tale is the end of a long path downward through increasing involvement in evil on the part of the pilgrims. But by this movement, both the reader and the pilgrims become increasingly aware of evil and, correspondingly, of moral standards. This awareness is supported by the tales themselves and is independent of outside reference to theology. The basic movement is from the concept of evil as an arbitrary force to the distinctly Christian concept of the individual's evil intention and action. The reader's awareness of the functions of evil develops faster and more fully than the pilgrims'. It includes the perception of evil as it functions in the themes of word and intent, in the idea of man's "privetee," in the paradise of "lesser goods," and in the pilgrims' uncharitable conduct. As the reader's perception of what is moral and good also increases, he is not only able to value the Pardoner's exemplum, but also to see the

Pardoner's admission of personal guilt as symbolic, on a level above the Pardoner himself, of the first step before penitence. This gives the Pardoner's Tale a double function but does not necessitate the movement of the tales toward penitence or pilgrimage.

In the reader's perception, the Shipman's Tale becomes a buffer, a neutral point among the tales which surround it. Any further concentration on depravity would open Chaucer to the same criticism the Knight uses upon the Monk:

That ye han seyde is right ynough, ywis,
And muchel more; for litel hevynesse
Is right ynough to muche folk, I gesse. (B², 3958-60)

In the Friar's and Summoner's tales the word play served to make the reader aware of irony and of the evil of misused words. Here, in the Shipman's Tale, the word play is devoid of such effects. The light tone and the word play take the reader's attention away from the sins of the characters.

It has already been mentioned that the tellers of the tales of Group B² seem less interested in establishing and defending personal power than do the tellers of previous tales. This situation is influenced by the fact that the former do not represent personal experiences in their tales and are therefore less likely to infect the tales with their personal misconceptions. For the reader, the effect is a shift from an involvement in confusion to a higher vantage point from which order and unity can be perceived. If Chaucer continued the method of personal confession as found in the Pardoner's

Tale, he would logically be forced to assign tales which progressed from awareness of personal sin to penitence for sin if he wished to represent a process of pilgrimage. Although some penitence is evident in the Prioress's words, in Chauntecleer, and in the Canon's Yeoman, none of these tales takes a shape similar to the Pardoner's. This would suggest that for the purpose of the work as a whole, the individual penitence of the pilgrims is not particularly important. Therefore, in looking for movements in the Tales which suggest the process of pilgrimage, we are not constrained by the pilgrims' limited development.

The basic movement is effected by Group B². The reader perceives that the tellers of these tales are sinners just as the previous tellers were and that the tales still illustrate sin. But the difference in tone and in the pilgrims' self-interest is also noticeable. The tone of the tales prior to Group B² is not one which supports the idea of pilgrimage by illustrating the virtues of love of God and love of one's neighbour for God. Looking briefly at the conclusions of some of these tales we find such remarks as "God sende him soone verray pestilence" (D, 1264), "Lat hym go honge himself a devil weye!" (D, 2242), "And lat hym care, and wepe, and wrynge, and waille!" (E, 1212). We also recall the quarrel between the Friar and Summoner and the explosion of the Host at the Pardoner. In the endings of the tales of Group B², the words are formed not as curses but as prayers. "God us sende of Taillyng ynough unto oure lyves ende" (B², 1623-4), "Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable"

(B², 1876), and "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (B², 4633). In the first groups the curses are indicative of involvement in evil and also of a lack of knowledge of its general and personal consequences. In the latter group, the words uttered in the form, if not always the theme, of prayer, imply some awareness of evil and of its consequences and an ability to remedy the evil with good.

The Prioressse does just this in praising Mary as one who intercedes for man and in telling a tale of a miracle which Mary works. Her tale is closer to Christian terms than the Man of Law's because the boy increases in virtue while Custance remains constant, but it is still not as effective as the Scriptural accounts of the miracles of healing and resurrection which Christ works. The Prioressse puts more emphasis on death as a physical end than on death as a spiritual beginning. She also emphasizes the miracle as spectacle. After her introduction, she spends over one hundred lines describing the death and the miracle. Of these, only one stanza (B², 1769-75) and one line of the child's speech are devoted to the idea of eternal life. Despite these limitations, it is evident from the tale that, however crudely, evil is beginning to be turned to good. This function of evil has not been apparent in the previous tales. Yet, in Augustinian terms as they were carried through to the fourteenth century, it is part of the essence of the Christian concept of evil. Having recognized this function, we may look back in the tales and see potential for the present development in the ethics which might be

gained from the Friar's and Summoner's tales, in Griselda's patience with Walter's inexcusable temptations, or in the personal confession in the Pardoner's Tale. The reader may use the presence of evil to draw moral instruction, but the potential does not begin to be actualized in terms of the movement of the work itself until we reach Group B². With this actualization, the limitations of evil become more and more apparent, and the idea of evil expressed within the tales comes closer to the full Christian concept.

The initial sin in the Tale of Melibee, the mortal wounding of Sophie (Wisdom), plays only a small part in the action of the tale. The emphasis falls on Prudence's attempts to rescue Melibee from his sinful wrath. Regardless of the outcome, the tale represents an attempt to turn an evil act and a condition of sin back toward good. On the allegorical level Prudence attributes the loss of Wisdom to Melibee's drunkenness with the pleasures of the world. Yet Melibee's sin has the attributes of felix culpa because it leads him to grief, which through Prudence's counselling leads him to understanding of and penitence for his original sin and presumably to a regaining of the allegorical Wisdom. Melibee illustrates, on a more human level than the Prioress's Tale, a remedy for evil.

Although the Monk's discussion of tragedy is generally useless from a Christian point of view, there are two positive references in his examples to the Christian concept of evil. He refers to Satan as Satan is understood in Augustinian terms:

O Lucifer, brightest of angels alle,
 Now artow Sathanas, that mayst nat tywnne
 Out of miserie, in which that thou are falle.
 (B², 3194-6)

Evil is restriction and bondage. He also understands that Adam's expulsion from Eden is caused not by Satan as an evil force, but by Adam's own "mysgovernaunce" (B², 3202). The Monk's other exempla offer several different causes for what the Monk calls tragedy. The only way in which unhappiness and sin in the tale may be counteracted is by interrupting the tale, as the Knight does. This exercise of judgment is not purely in terms of pleasure or "game." Even the Host's rather everyday moral -

. . . no remedie
 It is for to biwaille ne compleyne
 That that is doon . . . (B², 3974-6) -

risers about a concentration on pleasure.

In the Nun's Priest's Tale, on the literal level, disaster is turned to victory for Chauntecleer. But even on the literal level this tale is more subtly important than this single event would suggest. The chickens are possessed of human qualities: Pertelote is wife; Chauntecleer, husband. These human qualities extend into the ability to have and interpret dream visions. Chauntecleer exhibits human folly in ignoring the warning he himself interprets from his dream of the fox. He pays no heed to the value of either authority or experience, both of which raised important questions in the Knight's, the Wife's, the Friar's, and other tales. The fox is given similar human as well as diabolical qualities. Ultimately, on a literal level, Chauntecleer falls because of his very human pride, and is likewise saved by the

fox's pride.

The tale is far too rich to be taken only literally. While it is not necessary to follow a Robertsonian approach in finding allegorical significances for the characters,⁹ it is within reason to see the "fruyt" of the tale as an example of the salvation of a sinner. This is the tale in which grace, the supreme manifestation of "Goddess privatee," is best represented. The Man of Law's Tale, the Prioress's Tale, and the Second Nun's Tale are shallow by comparison. In these, Custance, the child, and Cecilie remain virtuous throughout their trials. The value of the first two tales is undermined by the misconceptions and lesser loves of the tellers. Although the story of a saint or martyr may have value in inspiring belief in the hearers, a tale such as Chauntecleer's, which represents the redemption of sin available for man because of Christ's sacrifice, is the basis for all other tales of saints and of Christian belief and is therefore important before all other tales. The hope for redemption from sin is the dynamic force which moves men in pilgrimage. The effect of this hope, again, is not necessarily to be looked for in terms of the pilgrims' reactions, but is to be regarded as a force which takes part in the theological and aesthetic shape and motion of the Canterbury Tales as a work of art. The Nun's Priest's Tale is therefore the most meaningful instance of the way in which an evil act, the sin of pride, may be turned to good. The Nun's Priest's advice to his audience is couched in Augustine's terms: "Taketh the

fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille." The movement in this tale and in Group B² which is centered on the idea that evil is ultimately subsumed under the all-prevading order of God, is consistent with the most basic Christian beliefs. Augustine writes:

This Catholic Church, strongly and widely spread throughout the world, makes use of all who err, to correct them if they are willing to be aroused, and to assist its own progress. . . . To all it gives power to participate in the grace of God, whether they are as yet to be formed or reformed, admitted for the first time or gathered in anew. Its own carnal members, i.e., those whose lives or opinions are carnal, it tolerates as chaff by which the corn is protected on the floor until it is separated from its covering. On this floor everyone voluntarily makes himself either corn or chaff. Therefore every man's sin or error is tolerated until he finds an accuser or defends his wicked opinion with pertinacious animosity. Those who are excluded return by way of penitence, or in baleful liberty sink into wickedness as a warning for us to be diligent; or they cause schisms to exercise our patience; or they beget a heresy to try our intelligence or to quicken it.¹⁰

The inclusion at the end of Group B² of a tale of a corrected sinner is the strongest single verification the reader can have that Chaucer intends the Canterbury Tales to imitate the process of pilgrimage.

After the Nun's Priest's Tale and particularly on the first reading of the work, the remaining tales appear anticlimactic. It is harder to establish continuity here than in any other part of the work. This problem may be partially explained by the incomplete nature of the Tales. Aside from this, the most useful fact to remember is that the tales were meant to be told on the journey both to and from Canterbury. While it is not the purpose of this study to try to determine which if any of the tales are told on the journey back, it is useful to speculate upon the movement of the general structure of the Canterbury Tales, had it been completed.

In physical terms the pilgrims are to journey to Canterbury and then to return back to their separate lives. In spiritual terms Canterbury represents the climax of the pilgrimage. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that if the individual themes and structures of the tales imitate the process of pilgrimage, then there should be a tale or group of tales which represent a climax. After this, with the climax as part of the pilgrims' and readers' experience, the remaining tales could move to different themes or to more common, everyday themes without detracting from the spiritual gain and without reversing the process of pilgrimage. This is possible because the Canterbury Tales moves by accumulation and juxtaposition and not by a tightly dramatic rising and falling action.¹¹ In the extant tales, the Nun's Priest's Tale is an obvious climax. Information from the Canon's Yeoman's and Maunciple's tales, however, discourages the speculation that the Nun's Priest's Tale marks the arrival at Canterbury. The narrator in the Canon's Yeoman's Prologue tells us that the pilgrims are at Boghtoun under Blee when the Canon and his Yeoman join them, and he later says in the Maunciple's Prologue that the Maunciple's Tale is told near Bobbe-up-and-down, which is generally taken by scholars to be Harbledown. If the Ellesmere order is correct here, and if the Maunciple's Tale is meant to be included in the Canterbury Tales, these factors would indicate that the pilgrims are still journeying to Canterbury. That this assessment is not completely verifiable is pointed out by Robinson in the introduction to his edition of the Canterbury Tales:

When overtaken by the Canon's Yeoman, the pilgrims are said to have been at "Boughton-under-Blee." In the Maunciple's Prologue, which begins the next fragment, they are Bob-up-and-Down, identified conjecturally as Harbledown, or a field in the vicinity between Boughton under Blean and Canterbury. It is usually understood that the company was now approaching Canterbury, and that the tales of the Maunciple and the Parson were intended to close the outward journey. But it is entirely possible, as has been recently suggested, that Chaucer meant the Maunciple's Tale to be told early on the way back to London, and that he was holding the Parson's Tale in reserve for the very end.¹²

Robinson also notes that "the [Maunciple's] tale bears no indication of having been written for one of the Canterbury pilgrims."¹³ Given the knowledge from the General Prologue that the tales were to be told on the journey to and from Canterbury, and given the Host's statement in the Parson's Prologue, it is rather difficult to hold that the Parson's Tale is told at the close of the outward journey as the pilgrims approach or arrive in Canterbury: The Host says:

"Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon.
Fulfilled is my sentence and my decree;
I trowe that we han herd of ech degree;
Almoost fulfild is al my ordinaunce (I, 16-18).

We therefore assume that the Parson's Tale is told as the pilgrims are nearing the Tabard on the journey back. The lack of textual evidence consigns the Second Nun's, the Canon's Yeoman's, and the Maunciple's tales to an uncertain physical position.

Dismissing the references to physical place, we will concentrate upon the moral or spiritual meanings which the three tales offer in relation to the idea of evil. The Second Nun's Tale is similar to the Prioress's in that it is addressed to Mary and involves a spectacular miracle. The Nun's Prologue, however, is far more didactic than either the Prioress's Prologue or Tale, and the

invocation to Mary places much more emphasis on Mary's powers of intercession and on the humility and sinful state of the speaker of the Prologue. The tale, though it deals with a miracle worked through the saint-like Cecilie and though the threat of evil is turned to good through the miracle, concentrates more upon the conversion of Valerian than upon the miracle as spectacle. It is this element of progress, the account of faith at work in the conversion of Valerian, Tiburce and Maximus, that makes the tale more effective than the Prioress's Tale from the perspective of individuals and their potential for Christian action. Cecilie's speeches to Almachius also convey the basic Christian doctrine that worldly power is nothing in comparison to the power of God, and that it is the inner eye and not the outer which is illuminated by God's truth and love. These statements stand in truth and move in the process of pilgrimage, especially since they follow tales wherein the limitations of experience and authority were evident in the sense of uneasiness in the pilgrims, and where the illusions of the pilgrims, as in the tales of Groups E and F, have clearly resulted in the unsatisfactory conclusions of their tales.

The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, as a fascinating exposure of man's will to power, is likewise linked to previous tales, particularly the Pardoner's. It is the second instance of a sinner confessing his sin. But whereas the Pardoner was proud of his sin, the Yeoman is not. While the Pardoner does not seem to realize the magnitude of his sin, and more important, its effect on him, the Yeoman is fully aware that

his involvement in sin has entrapped him. Both the theme and the structure of the Canon's Yeoman's Tale are manifestations of a function of the idea of evil. The structure will be dealt with in the next chapter, which will be devoted to the aesthetic shapes given to the idea of evil in the Tales as a whole. Thematically, the tale is a clear representation of the process leading away from salvation, a process in which so many of the pilgrims in the first half of the work seem to be involved. Chaucer's introduction of two new characters at this late stage in the journey is effective in aiding the reader's understanding of the movement of the whole work. The Canon and his Yeoman are complete outsiders. The reader can therefore compare their attitudes and actions to those of the pilgrims and can thereby determine more closely the direction in which the tales move.

The Canon and Yeoman, like many of the pilgrims, have given themselves over to a form of the lesser good of knowledge. Their involvement in alchemy, like the Wife's in sensual love, is a means of asserting personal power. But alchemy is far worse than sensual love because it is an attempt to place oneself in the creative and controlling position of God, over the physical world. The Canon in particular is jealous of his "privetee" or power, just as are the Wife, Friar, Summoner, and the tellers of tales in Groups E and F. It has already been noted that the possession of personal power does not equip these pilgrims to understand their own situations or to understand the operation of Christian ideals. The exercise of

personal power leads only to the depravity of the Pardoner. The Canon belongs on a level beyond which the movement of the Tales has passed.

When the Yeoman threatens to reveal the Canon's "privetee," the Host has no sympathy for the latter's distress. The Canon fears this revelation, as did the Reeve and Summoner, but he reacts differently. The Reeve and Summoner "quit" their attackers; the Canon flees. Another point of variance is that the Yeoman's attack is much more direct and personal than the Miller's or Reeve's. Because the pair are not among the original group, they have no intent to journey in pilgrimage, and neither are they included in the original "game." The Yeoman's attack is therefore in "erdest," and the Canon, who is without any higher purpose such as pilgrimage, has nothing to sustain him and so flees. Because the Canon is not under "game," there would be no means for him to answer the Yeoman, even if he stayed.

The Yeoman's decision to reveal his master's "privetee" is also interesting. It is only when he joins the pilgrimage, after seven years of service to the Canon, that he suddenly determines to expose alchemy. Of his past experience with alchemy he says:

And yet, for al my smert, and al my grief,
For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
I koude nevere leve it in no wise. (G, 712-14)

Yet his present physical separation from the Canon and his denunciation of alchemy can be seen to symbolize escape. While it is not possible to look further into the Yeoman's character for

explanations, it is possible to see the Yeoman, while he is outside the pilgrimage, as a man without hope, and when he joins the pilgrims, as a man able to expose what has been his own sin as well as the Canon's. This illustration of progress is more on a symbolic than a literal level and should aid the reader in understanding that though the pilgrims are sinners, their intent to pilgrimage should prevent him from regarding the pilgrims as without hope or damnable.

The reader can use the Canon's Yeoman's Tale to understand more clearly the danger of the functions of evil which are found in Groups D, E and F in particular. For the reader, the Yeoman's statement:

We blondren evere and pouren in the fir,
And for al that we faille of oure desir,
For evere we lakke oure conclusioun, (G, 670-2)

is an apt summation of the position of all the power-seeking pilgrims. Alchemy, as an attempt to create the perfect, immutable substance, can be compared with the attempts in Groups E and F to create earthly paradise. The Canon and Yeoman do with material substances what the Clerk, the Squire, and the Franklin do with words, and what Januarie does with his imagination. They all delude themselves with the magic of human power.

For the reader, the Canon's Yeoman's Tale also takes part in the movement which turns evil to good because it provides a reliable means of judging previous functions of evil, and because it so clearly

reveals evil's limitations. The "slidyng science" results only in loss and in entrapment within endless mutability.

As it stands in the Ellesmere order, the Maunciple's Tale has a rather disruptive influence on the tendency toward moralization and clarification of the concept of evil in the previous two tales. The tone of both Prologue and Tale is negative. In the Prologue, the Host addresses the Cook in the same unkind tone with which he addresses all those who are not his superiors. The Maunciple's offer to tell a tale in the Cook's place is equally unkind. He calls the Cook a "stynkng swyn" (H, 40) and offers him more wine to show him a fool in the eyes of the other pilgrims:

" . . . I have heer in a gourde
A draghte of wyn, ye, of a ripe grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
This Cook shal drynke therof, if I may.
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay." (H, 82-86)

The tale itself concerns Phebus, who, in this case, instead of being a warrior worthy of his talents, slays the serpent Phitoun while it lies sleeping. In this, Phebus is like the Maunciple himself, who does not attack until the Cook is too drunk to defend himself. This fault in the Maunciple makes it rather difficult to determine his attitude toward the tale he tells. He disapproves of Phebus' jealous devotion towards his wife, of the wife's unfaithfulness, and in general of "appetit which fleemeth discrecioun" (H, 182). In attacking the Cook, he is guilty of this same appetite. He does make the valuable statement that, in essence, sin is sin no matter if the person be male or female, or of high or low degree. But the tale

proper, with the punishment of the crow for revealing a sin, and the Maunciple's closing moral, "My sone, be war, and be noon auctour newe/ Of tidynges, wheither they been false or trewe" (H, 359-60), hardly seems to relate to his previous statement that:

The word moot nede accorde with the dede.
If men shal telle proprely a thyng,
The word moot cosyn be to the werkyng. (H, 208-10)

The crow's words relate truly what the crow witnesses, yet the Maunciple approves the crow's punishment. Unfortunately, the Maunciple's observations on jealous reactions and on jangling are true, as is another statement he makes: "He is his thral to whom that he hath sayd/ A tale of which he is now yvele apayd" (H, 357-8). But jealousy and jangling are more common in a situation where individuals recognize the guilt of others, without recognizing personal sin. The Maunciple's Tale reverts back, against the increased understanding of personal sin, to a state similar to that found in the Friar's or Summoner's tales. If the name "Bobbe-up-and-doun" and the drunken Cook's fall from his horse are significant, the tale is perhaps best interpreted as an example of the ease with which the process moving toward the highest good can, particularly but not exclusively on the pilgrims' level, shift into a process restricted by evil.

The Parson's Tale is the last and most didactic of the tales. It deals with the orthodox doctrine of penitence and the Seven Deadly Sins - subjects the pilgrims have doubtless heard before. As

such, it represents a return from the adventures of the journey to the everyday world and a rather dry restatement of the sins with which the spiritual pilgrimage is dynamically concerned. It is a proper ending for the tales and aids the modern reader in particular in clarifying medieval doctrine; but in contrast to the rest of the Canterbury Tales, which is involved in processes which move men toward good or toward evil, the Parson's Tale represents a rather remote ideal. Its importance as a theological statement is not to be underestimated; neither should its place in the Tales as a work of art be overestimated. If Chaucer had only meant to show men how they might prepare for salvation, the advice in the Parson's Tale alone would suffice. The presence of the other tales indicates that in the total work Chaucer's main concern is not the bare theological ideal, but the process of confronting evil which involves both the theology and the aesthetics of the work.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHAPE OF EVIL

The bulk of the study to this point has been devoted to explaining the importance of the idea of evil in the Canterbury Tales, to showing the ways in which the concept of evil changes, and to pointing out some of the functions of this idea. The discussion has dealt almost entirely with evil as a theological concept, has centered upon this concept as it is presented in the tales themselves, and has referred to theological doctrine only to show that the work follows orthodox belief and that it moves in a process of pilgrimage. It is now necessary to consider the ways in which the theological idea of evil in the Canterbury Tales influences the aesthetic functions of evil, and to discuss in turn how the medieval aesthetic conventions and principles might shape the idea. Because of the interrelationship of aesthetics and theology, it will not always be possible to discuss the operation of one on the other in a "cause and effect" manner.

The question of how the aesthetic structure relates to the theological ideals is an important one for the poet as man. That Chaucer is sensitive to the power of words and to the possibility of the abuse of words is evident from the Friar's, the Summoner's and the Maunciple's tales in particular, and also from the Retraction. The danger that springs from the misuse of words has already been

mentioned in discussing the Friar's Tale. In theological terms, the eternal promise of God is manifest in Christ, who is Logos or word.¹ Augustine recognized the importance of words as man uses them: "Words, by virtue of being creations of man, are 'signs.' They are not to be enjoyed for themselves or for any beauty which they may contain, but are to be used to direct the reader toward ultimate truths."² This is a theological rather than distinctly poetic view and is not meant to represent the views of Chaucer or other writers of the fourteenth century but only to stress the doctrinal attitude.

It is useful at this point to make brief mention of some of the basic tenets of medieval aesthetics before trying to determine how the aesthetic structure of the Canterbury Tales may be related to the specific idea of evil. Since the discussion on aesthetics will be very general, it should not force a pattern upon the Tales, but should only provide some guidelines for interpretation.

The position of the medieval artist in relation to religious doctrine is difficult to determine, especially since the artist was influenced by pagan philosophers and technical handbooks as well as by the Bible and the Church Fathers.³ In addition, there were changes in poetic theories as the Middle Ages progressed. There seems to be a conflict in medieval aesthetics between the view of the poet as a man in possession of knowledge of a higher truth and the view of a poet as a man with technical knowledge of a craft. While the School

of Chartres agreed with Augustine in believing that "the activity of the human artist is compared with the work of the divine artist, . . ."⁴ the handbooks compiled by Matthiew de Vendome and Geoffrey de Vinsauf of this same school dealt only with technical knowledge. The tendency to regard the poet as a man in possession of technical knowledge was given impetus by Aquinas' statement: "in no intellectual activity of the human mind can there properly speaking be found anything but literal sense. . . ."⁵ Under Thomism, the literary approach to the study of religion gave way to ". . . an approach based on dialectic and a rational interpretation of the data of faith. What has been called 'symbolic theology' was being replaced by scholastic theology."⁶ But by the fourteenth century, influenced by the scepticism of Ockham and Scotus, scholastic theology became less important and the need for faith was stressed. Though Scotus was sceptical about the ability of man to know God, he believed that through the freedom of the will "man . . . can know what he must do to reach his true end by following the moral law of doing good and the divine law of the Ten Commandments."⁷ Whereas Aquinas' statement contradicted Augustine's idea that man is capable of expressing his knowledge of higher truths in his art, Scotus' does not. It therefore seems reasonable to approach fourteenth century aesthetics with the belief that the art of man is capable of dealing with the higher truths expressed in the divine law of the Scriptures.⁸ This view is verified by what we have already discovered about the involvement of the Canterbury Tales in a process of

pilgrimage.

Edgar de Bruyne states that during the thirteenth century, poetry ". . . began to be considered as distinct from grammar and rhetoric."⁹ He also offers comment on the position of the medieval poet:

Even in religion, contemplation is superior to action, and action is of greater value than production. Why should this not hold true as well for the secular order? The grandeur of the arts results not from actualization of exterior forms, but from creation through rational, deliberate knowledge, and participation in the activity of the mind rather than that of nature. As is evident, the specifically human quality precedes the beauty of the object. The artist is human insofar as he participates in contemplation, the highest activity of the spiritual life, and he participates insofar as he is intellectually in possession of the general rules which, at one extreme, as Aristotle calls it, apply to the physical exercise of his art, but at the other are rooted in the eternal structure of the world.¹⁰

This comment unites the concepts of artist as technician and artist as possessor of higher knowledge and makes clearer the close relationship between medieval theology and aesthetics.

The problem will now be to discuss the shapes of particular tales as they relate to the several functions of the idea of evil. If the functions of evil are found to appear in aesthetic shapes of more sophistication than a simple group of descriptive words, it will be more possible to explain the dynamic nature of the involvement of the Tales in pilgrimage. In this case, an explanation of the nature of the movement will also serve as an explanation of how the movement can be best perceived by the reader. In the previous chapters, incidental to the main topics of discussion, it has been mentioned that the pilgrims are not meant to develop and that they cannot be

approached as one would approach a character in a novel by Lawrence, Austen or Elliot. From these chapters which concentrate upon the changes which the idea of evil undergoes, the reader may have gained the impression that the changes constitute a kind of dramatic progression similar to that in a modern novel.¹¹ The frame of the pilgrimage that Chaucer gives the work may be partially to blame for this impression, since the theological concept of pilgrimage involves the idea of a journey through life's hardships, an overcoming of sin, a receiving of grace, and salvation and eternal benediction in God. Christian belief in itself is dynamic and rather dramatic. The purpose of dealing with aesthetics is to deal with the theological aspects already discussed and with the whole work, in as purely a medieval manner as possible. An examination of the work through its aesthetic shapes should correct any misconceptions the reader may have about the movement and meanings of this particular work.

Since there is little awareness of evil in Group A, it is not appropriate to explore this group for aesthetic expressions of the idea of evil. The Man of Law's Tale presents the first opportunity. It has already been shown that the Man of Law misunderstands the idea of spiritual poverty and misinterprets the Christian concepts of good and evil. By examining his abuse of words and by observing the shape of his tale, the nature of this misinterpretation will be more clearly defined.

The Man of Law begins the tale proper with a straightforward

description of persons and events. He digresses slightly (B¹, 190-203) on the power of stars over men's lives and then continues his account of the Sultan. Then he suddenly breaks into the narrative (B¹, 295) to exclaim again about the control of the stars over human events. The exclamation is entirely out of place in a tale in which the order of Custance's life is presumably controlled by God. The Man of Law sees the basic cause of Custance's suffering to be her unfortunate horoscope; this alone destroys the idea that the tale is a representation of the operation of "Goddess privetee" in time. The theme of sainthood and Custance's Christian virtues become less important because of the control of the stars. As Augustine says: "It is the cause for which he suffers rather than the fact of his suffering that makes the martyr."¹²

Although the reader might still consider that the tale is about Custance, the Man of Law does not seem at all sure. In the passage immediately after the merchants' description of Custance, the Man of Law says: "But now to purpos lat us turne agayn" (B¹, 170). He then tells us that the merchants went home:

Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
And doon hir nedes as they han doon yoore,
And lyven in wele; I kan sey yow namoore. (B¹, 173-5)

This is surely not his purpose, yet the "I kan sey yow namoore" is an effective break between the preceding lines and the continuation of the narrative. At best, this structure is rather disjointed. In a later passage he describes Custance's departure and follows this

with the statement: "And turne I wole agayn to my matere"

(B¹, 322). There follows a description of the Sultan's mother.

In this, the Man of Law implies that Custance is a digression and that the Sultaness is really the main topic of interest. Later yet, in describing the marriage of Custance and Alla, he says:

Me list nat of the chaf, ne of the stree,
 Maken so long a tale as of the corn.
 What should I tellen of the roialtee
 At marriage, or which cours goth biforn;
 Who bloweth in a trumpe or in a horn?
 The fruyt of every tale is for to seye:
 They ete, and drynke, and daunce, and synge, and pleye.
 (B¹, 701-707)

The combination of praeteritio and statements about the purpose of the tale is an exhibit of disregard for a constructive use of rhetoric and for the meaning of both stanza and tale. In the first two lines, the Man of Law says that he wishes to concentrate on essentials. His use of the Scriptural terms "corn" and "chaf" implies a moral purpose. The praeteritio on the marriage feast in the following three lines appears extremely insignificant because of its proximity to the supposed statement of purpose. The final couplet is most interesting. The Man of Law says that it is the fruit of a tale which should be told, which is in itself not a very astounding statement, and balances the first line with the most incongruous subject possible, more description of the marriage feast. What is the fruit of his tale? The Man of Law seems to have no idea at all. In addition to the difficulties that his statement "I will now turn to my matter" causes within the tale, his use of the statement as a rhetorical device is not in accord with standard

rhetorical practise. John Manly, in his article on "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," notes that "In Chaucer, after a rhetorical beginning, the transition to the narrative itself is usually clearly and formally indicated; so for example in Troilus and Criseyde: 'For now wol I gon streight to my matere.'¹³ The Man of Law only inserts the statement into his narrative; he never uses it as transition between rhetorical and descriptive passages. His misuse of this device is one example of his misuse of words.

Because the Man of Law refers so many times to God, to Mary, to Christ, and to their interventions in Custance's life, the reader has every right to expect the tale to be an expression of Christian doctrine. But an examination of the Man of Law's use of words in reference to the Trinity, Mary, and Satan, reveals only misconception. For example, he refers to both God and Satan as if they were people, as is Daniel:

Who saved Danyel in the horrible cave
 Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
 Was with the leon frete er he asterte?
 No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.
 (underlining mine) (B¹, 473-6)

Of Satan he says:

Sathan, that evere us waiteth to bigile,
 Saugh of Custance al hire perfecciou,
 And caste anon how he myghte quite hir while,
And made a yong knyght that dwelte in that toun
 Love hir so hoote, of foul affeccioun,
 That verraily hym thoughte he shold spille.
 (underlining mine) (B¹, 582-587)

In this, the Man of Law denies free will. Reference to Augustine points out the magnitude of his misconception of God: ". . . to

describe this principle [logos] as 'the arbitrary will of an extra-cosmic person' is to betray a complete misapprehension of its nature and operation." ¹⁴ It has already been pointed out that, in Christian terms, evil should not be conceived of as a force, let alone as manifested in Satan conceived of as a person. In his choice of the word "wight," the Man of Law misconceives aesthetically, he abuses the word, and he misunderstands theologically. As Chaucer warns us through the Merchant, "He that mysconceyveth, he mysdemeth" (E, 2410). One misconception is not necessarily the cause of the other; they simply appear in conjunction.

Although the tale describes Custance's movement through space from Rome to Surrey, to Northumbria, to a pagan land, to Rome, to Northumbria, and to Rome, it shows her to be constant spiritually. This stasis in spirit is particularly significant when we consider the medieval Christian idea of life as a pilgrimage. Instead of representing Christian linear time and showing Custance's increasing virtue, the tale moves in a circle and in doing so, becomes formless in terms of Christian doctrine. ¹⁵ But this theological formlessness, as was noted at the end of the introduction to this study, must take an aesthetic shape. Here the shape is not one of rambling formlessness as in the Squire's Tale or Sir Thopas, but is carefully controlled by Chaucer to emphasize the Man of Law's theological misinterpretations. The tale represents a process without a goal, but is made to do so through deliberate aesthetic

and thematic disjointedness, which is a travesty of both aesthetic principles and theological ideals.

The Man of Law's use of apostrophe is an example of the way in which an aesthetic device may shape the effect of a tale. His first apostrophe to the "cruel firmament" (B¹, 295) reveals his misconception of the source of universal order. His second to the "Sowdanesse, roote of iniquitee" (B¹, 358) describes her in forceful terms as a serpent, representative of the malice of hell. Immediately following, he addresses Satan and says: "Thou madest Eva brynge us in servage" (B¹, 68) (underlining mine), and so again denies free will. Next, he addresses himself to fate: "O sodeyn wo, that evere art successour/ To worldly blisse . . ." (B¹, 421-2), again indicating that he has no concept of divine order. When he addresses Donegild, he does so in the same terms as he addressed the Sultanesse. She is a fiend, a personification of the force of evil. His last apostrophe to an abstraction of the sin of "luxurie" is the only one which is acceptable to Christian doctrine and medieval practice. Because the apostrophe is a forceful rhetorical structure and because in all but the last apostrophe the Man of Law misconceives Christian doctrine, they collectively help to ruin the tale as a Christian exemplum. These misconceptions which are expressed through apostrophe would be far less effective if they were instead only parts of the narrative. The apostrophe catches and holds the reader's attention to the misconception.

The next tales to be dealt with will be those of the Friar

and Summoner. Since both tales manifest the lowest proportion of rhetorical figures in comparison to the other tales,¹⁶ it is necessary to look elsewhere for the aesthetic function of the idea of evil. Both the Friar's and Summoner's tales are closer than the Man of Law's to a Christian concept of evil. The summoner in the Friar's Tale betrays his office and the Christian faith. In doing this, he himself becomes a more fiendish spirit than either the Sultanness or Donegild, or the fiend whom he encounters in the tale. Although the fiend is a personification of evil, neither the theological nor aesthetic function of the idea of evil center upon his presence. The summoner as a man seeks power over other men, but because his exertion of power is based on an evil will, he is already bound within the limitations of evil. The fiend is only a vehicle for making the limitation of the summoner's power clear. It is the ironic dialogue between the two which makes the encounter thematically and aesthetically effective. Consider the effect upon the theological functions of the idea of evil if the Friar had used the same apostrophizing technique which the Man of Law employs. Because the reader sees the limitations of the summoner's power, he scorns or pities the summoner's naivety in swearing brotherhood to a fiend. To maintain this attitude, an apostrophe by the Friar would perhaps begin "O sely summoner" This intrusion of an outside moral judgment would place the summoner at one remove from the reader and would tend to make him seem less responsible for his evil will. An apostrophe to the fiend would make him appear as a more powerful evil force, especially since the fiend already

represents evil. This would tend to move the theological concept of evil in the tale toward the heretical view of evil as an exterior force. Conversely, the use of the dialogue between "brothers" brings the idea of evil directly into the realm of man's actions. Apostrophe or exemplum would force fiend and man apart; dialogue brings them together. The special effectiveness of the dialogue is a result of the ironic use of the words "feith" and "trouthe." On a theological level, the summoner's failure to recognize the relationship of word and intent damns him to spiritual disorder and restriction. But the aesthetic expression of this disorder is not through structural formlessness but through a pattern which the abuse of "feith" and "trouthe" creates. The abuse of these specific words is an abuse of the proper order wherein they have Christian intent and meaning. They are the key words in the dialogue, and so pattern the structure of the tale; but the pattern they provide is ironically non-Christian. The irony which arises from their abuse is therefore, ultimately, an irony of form.

In the Summoner's Tale, the true value of the friar's words is revealed by the "reward" he and his fellows receive. The friar preaches not to help his hearers, but to gain material reward. His wilful deception of others is spiritual death. For the corrupt spirit which manifests itself in the sin of gluttony, the fart is a particularly suitable recompence. Because the fart is to be divided among the members of the convent, just as the empty words of the friar

were divided among the people, the fart also becomes a symbol of the friar's words - words of faith devoid of meaning. This parallel gives a force and resonance to the idea of evil as it is expressed by the abused word. The idea of evil in the tale ultimately assumes the "shape" of the fart. For these reasons, the fart here is much more significant than that in the Miller's Tale.

The method of division of the fart is also significant.

The Lord's steward suggests:

Lat bryng a cartwheel heere into this halle;
 But looke that it have his spokes alle, -
 Twelve spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.
 And bryng me thanne twelve freres, woot ye why?
 For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.
 Youre confessour heere, for his worthynesse,
 Shal parfourne up the nombre of his covent. (D, 2255-61)

The fart, which represents the friar's empty words is to be divided as Christ's gospel was divided, with the friar as an ironic substitute for Christ at the center of the wheel, and with the twelve "freres" as disciples at the ends of the spokes. This method of division makes even clearer the terrible evil in the friar's conduct. Since the idea of evil assumes the "shape" of the fart, it also is divided upon the wheel which is properly the apostles' wheel and the pattern for Christian brotherhood. This conclusion is fittingly anticipated in the Prologue to the Tale: the scatological metaphor there becomes the patterned aesthetic eschatology. The order and pattern of Christian teaching is therefore abused by the shape of the tale just as the order and meaning understood in the words "feith" and "trouthe"

was abused in the Friar's Tale. In both tales the aesthetic function is not formless but is tightly controlled; the result is the expression of theological disorder through a terribly ironic order and pattern.

In Group E-F, the Merchant's Tale provides the best example of a function of evil which is both theological and aesthetic. Intellectually and from a theological point of view, involvement in sin is involvement in illusion. Augustine warns his readers that the mirror of the mind often reflects the "swelling, fleeting phantasms"¹⁷ of the world, rather than God's truth and love, and so sees only random mutability and not order. Because the Merchant has no better concept of marriage than does Januarie, the tale itself, as well as Januarie's mind, is a reflection of phantasms and mutability. For a man who has experienced marital woe, the Merchant tells a tale which is remarkably hard on Januarie and easy on May. He calls Januarie a fool at the outset, and then proceeds with a long passage on the virtues of marriage. The passage is largely sarcastic, but at the same time reveals the Merchant's misconceptions about marriage. Speaking of the creation of Adam and Eve, he talks of marriage as sacrament and the wife as man's helpmate. But he also says "That wyf is mannes helpe and his confort,/ His paradys terrestre, and his Disport" (E, 1331-2). This reveals his cupidity. Later he says:

Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Catoun bit;
She shal commande, and thou shalt suffren it,
And yet she wole obeye of curteisys.
A wyf is kepere of thyn housbondrye;

Wel may the sike man biwaille and wepe,
 Ther as ther nys no wyf the hous to kepe.
 I warne thee, if wisely thou wolt wirche,
 Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loved his chirche.
 If thou lovest thyself, thou lovest thy wyf;
 No man hateth his flessch, but in his lyf
 He fostreth it, and therefore bidde I thee,
 Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt nevere thee. (E, 1377-88)

In the first part of this quotation, the Merchant's attitude is that the wife is dominant. Since his own experience has been with a shrewish wife, the attitude is probably sincere, though not necessarily one of acceptance. From a medieval perspective this order is "up so down."¹⁸ The Merchant then exhorts his audience to love their wives as Christ loved his Church. The two ideas are in complete opposition. The love of Christ for the Church is spiritual and is seen as the dominant love of husband for wife in the accepted medieval view. The Merchant does not seem to realize that he is constantly contradicting himself. When he argues that one must love one's wife because husband and wife are one flesh, he seems more interested in self-love than in shared, and he says nothing at all about a spiritual bond. He does not distinguish between the authority of Catoun, that of the Old Testament, and that of Christ. Because of these factors, he can have no control over the tale of Januarie.¹⁹ He himself is bound within worldly illusions.

Because Januarie tries to find stability through his lustful marriage with May rather than through caritas, he falls into instability and random change. The Merchant's apostrophe to Fortune adds to this sense of instability. So also does Chaucer's insertion of a parody of the Song of Songs in one of Januarie's speeches to May

(E, 2138-48). Because the Song is both a love poem unpervverted by lust in marriage and also an allegory on the love of Christ for the Church, it makes the evil of Januarie's situation more apparent. The exchange between Pluto and Proserpine takes the tale further from a Christian context, as does Pluto's restoration of Januarie's sight. Physical sight is no substitute for spiritual. The Merchant's means of resolving problems in marriage is ultimately sheer trickery.

The idea of evil in the tale is first represented through the sin of lust. The comparison of the lustful mind to a mirror enables the reader to visualize the events of the tale as phantasms. Aesthetically, because art represents life and the medieval concept of life is as a process ordered by God, the unharmonious picture which the Merchant's Tale reveals is a picture of disorder and is therefore evil. Here again, as in the Man of Law's Tale, the aesthetic shape of disorder is not complete aesthetic formlessness but is a patterned series of speeches, exempla, parody, apostrophe, myth and image. Through Januarie's worldly images such as that of woman as wax to be shaped by man, through the Merchant's apostrophe to Fortune, through the degrading parody of the Song of Songs, and through the inclusion of pagan mythology, the evil illusion is shaped and strengthened. In his understanding, the Merchant has created an image of marriage for himself which is an image of cupidity. He therefore cannot understand the Christian concept of marriage²⁰ which involves love of wife for God rather than for concupiscence,

and is validated by analogy with the love of Christ for the Church. The tale is involved with a process of love, but because it is a mirror image and distortion of the Christian process, it is an abuse of love as caritas. Because the tale is a false paradise whose action centres in Januarie's garden, a parody of Eden, the events in the garden manifest cupiditas. The theological representation of disorder and illusion is effected not by aesthetic formlessness but by an aesthetic form which exists in the ironic reversal of true Christian process.

Aesthetically, the Squire's Tale represents in a simple way the function of evil as complete formlessness. His tale promises to go on and on without either aesthetic shape or thematic purpose. Since the Squire is the only poet on the pilgrimage - "He koude aonges make and wel endite" (A, 95) - this fault in him is more grievous than the same fault would be in an unlettered pilgrim. As stated by de Bruyne, the poet must be ". . . intellectually in possession of the general rules which, at one extreme, as Aristotle calls it, apply to the physical exercise of his art, but at the other are rooted in the eternal structure of the world."²¹ The Squire appears to possess neither.

In the Man of Law's, the Friar's, and Summoner's and the Merchant's tales, the aesthetic and theological functions of the idea of evil are inseparably related. The aesthetic misconceptions are most evident in tales which purport to deal with facts or questions relating to Christine doctrine. For this reason a tale such as the

Shipman's, which plays with words but which does not deal with Christine doctrine, is devoid of an aesthetic expression of evil. Since the tales of Group B² change in tone from the previous tales, and since in essence they are juxtaposed against the earlier tales both to affirm the possibility of pilgrimage in the Canterbury Tales and to illustrate the transformation of the idea of evil into a process of good, it is useless to examine them for abuse of words, use of irony, parody, exempla, or any combination of aesthetic structures which pattern the various theological functions of the idea of evil. In the previous tales, the experience of life is dominated by loss; in the tales of Group B², it is the experience of evil which is recognized as loss. Because the majority of pilgrims in the first groups do not recognize their sins or consequently their involvement in evil, evil is dominant in the aesthetic and theological composition of their tales. There is no remedy within these groups for the vision of life as loss. Because evil is recognized as the cause of loss in the tales of B², in the Tale of Melibee and the Nun's Priest's Tale in particular, the situation is no longer without remedy. Such recognition suggests contrition, which precedes confession and satisfaction. The tales accordingly are dominated by the working of Mary or Prudence on the literal level, or by such qualities as mercy and love in the Prioress's Tale or grace in the Nun's Priest's. As is evident from the Host's and Knight's reactions to Sir Thopas and the Monk's Tale, the aesthetic evil of formlessness and the moral evil of useless "hevynesse" are no longer to be condoned.

In the whole of the Canterbury Tales, the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is the best example of conjoining aesthetic and theological functions of the idea of evil. We must question why it is placed late in the tales rather than being put with tales of its kind before Group B². In the other tales the idea of evil functions aesthetically as formlessness, irony, or a disharmony in the image of the world. Theologically it can function as a force in the Man of Law's Tale, as the false paradise in Groups E and F, as self-deception and spiritual death in the Pardoner's Tale, and generally as any one of a number of sins. What makes the Canon's Yeoman's Tale different? There are several aspects to consider. First, while the effects of evil are apparent from the reader's perspective in the other tales, the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is the only tale in which the recognition of the effects of personal involvement in evil takes place on the level of the pilgrims. Many other pilgrims are aware of their involvement in mutabilitas or change as loss, but only the Canon's Yeoman sees his involvement in mutabilitas as the direct result of his love of alchemy, a sinful "sliding science." Secondly, the endless mutabilitas, which is the opposite movement to the process of pilgrimage and which can be taken as the controlling theme of the tale, is a more abstract form of evil than any heretofore and is at the same time made more conceivable in both aesthetic and theological terms than evil as aesthetic formlessness as in Sir Thopas, or evil as force. Lastly, the Canon and his Yeoman are outsiders, not pilgrims, and so are not subject to the common experience of the other pilgrims. A close

examination of the tale will show how these factors are important and why the tale is effective in its position in the Ellesmere order.

There is a sense of constant motion in the tale from the time the Canon and Yeoman arrive in a sweat until the Yeoman's final denouncement of multipliers as men bound to "prolle ay" (G, 1412). The tale is a well constructed imitation of alchemy and as such is one of the best and most concrete means possible of exemplifying undesirable mutabilitas. As in the Man of Law's and the Friar's, the Summoner's and the Merchant's tales, evil, which is ultimately formlessness from a theological perspective, is given a distinct aesthetic shape. On a theological level this shape is mutabilitas; on a more concrete level it is multiplication. The mutabilitas exists on two levels within the tale which correspond to two levels of alchemy. The constant physical change results from involvement in exoteric alchemy, and the spiritual "proollyng" results from attempting the goals of esoteric alchemy. It has already been noted that alchemy arises from man's desire to understand and control the movement of Providence, which is rightfully under God's control. Both exoteric and esoteric alchemy are attempts to pry into "Goddess privetee," but the exoteric branch is particularly gross since it seeks a material rather than a spiritual perfection. In exoteric alchemy the goal was to remove from base metals the sulphurous impurities which prevented them from becoming the gold they were ordained to be. As the furnace is the most important instrument in

the workings of exoteric alchemy, so also it is relevant to the structure and development of the Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale. The furnace might be said to symbolize alchemical mutability. The process in the furnace is loosely analogous to the total process of the tale.²² It provides a means of discussing mutabilitas, which emphasizes the idea of paramount importance to Chaucer, the end or goal of the mutability. Without the furnace as an ordering device, the distinct direction of the alchemical change and the movement of mutability toward damnation might be obscured. The operation of the furnace provides a thematic and structural unity for the whole tale, which studies of character relationships fail to provide.²³

The furnace was known as the "Triple Vessell" and had three sections: the fire, the oven in which materials were placed, and the upper section for distillation or sublimation.²⁴ The relationship of the Prologue to the fire is established both in the first part of the Prologue by direct references to heat and sweat, and by the discussion between the Host and Yeoman identifying the "fire" which inspires the Canon's and Yeoman's actions. Of twenty-five lines of description of the pair, eight are devoted to stressing warmth and sweat. Chaucer, even before he has revealed the identity of the pair, compares the Canon's appearance to that of the furnace: "His forheed dropped as a stillatorie,/ Were ful of plantayne and paritorie" (G, 580-1). Here, the description of the character is deliberately being made to accommodate the alchemical theme. The colors mentioned

may also be related to the fire, black representing the charcoal and grey and white the ashes of the fire. In a symbolic comparison, it is just such ash that the Yeoman in particular has become.

The pair also spark the Host's interest. In attempting to find a satisfying truth, he is drawn into a process much like alchemy, following the Yeoman's multiplied replies for nearly seven hundred lines before receiving an answer. The Prologue may be seen as both a "smart" and "esy" fire since it contains both denunciation and acclamation of alchemy. To the alchemist, fire was a substance: material that burned well contained large amounts of fire.²⁵ The Prologue can be seen as fire since it is the essence of the larger material in the Tale, and because, in explaining the motivations of the characters, it is also a catalyst for the action. Fire is a most mutable and, ironically, the most purifying element; the presence of fire in the tale is the cause of mutabilitas.

The first part of the Tale most obviously relates to the oven in its discussion of the material involved in alchemy. If the oven is taken to represent the center of the experimental process, the relationship becomes stronger. The disjointed nature of the Yeoman's account both illustrates the befuddling effect of alchemy on the individual and seems to be a deliberate attempt on Chaucer's part to imitate the process of experimentation. It is well known that the alchemists, like Chaucer's Canon, were persistent in repeating their experiments in spite of constant failure. In the first part of the Tale, the Yeoman describes the experimentation - from the original hope

to the ultimate failure - repeatedly. The first four lines contain the first instance:

With this Chanoun I dwelt have seven yeer,
 An of his science am I never the neer.
 Al that I hadde I have list therby,
 And, God woot, so hath many mo than I. (G, 720-3)

"Nevere the neer" suggests the circular and futile motion of the Yeoman. His case is one of pointless change. The Yeoman repeats the process of description four times, expanding the detail more with each repetition. The section after the end of the fourth repetition (G, 784-864) is a list of materials which is interrupted by a digression on the futility of the art. This circular and interrupted structure which continues to the end of the first part allows Chaucer to reiterate, through the Yeoman, the idea of constant failure. An orderly presentation of alchemy, giving materials and methods, hopes and then the final failure would be far less effective.

Where the first part of the Tale deals with personal failure, the effect of alchemy upon the Canon and Yeoman themselves, the second part illustrates the wider effect on other's hopes.²⁶ The movement in the rhetoric from the Prologue and the first part of the Tale is one of amplification on the same facts and ideas. What is a personal vice of the Yeoman's Canon:

He is to wys, in feith, as I bileeve.
 That that is overdoon, it wol nat preeve
 Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vice. (G, 644-46)

has become an uncontrollable plague in the canon of the exemplum in part two of the Tale: "Ther is a chanoun of religioun/ Amonges us,

wolde infecte al a toun" (G, 972-3). The amplification conveys a sense of failure and of the power of evil, which a single, logical description of the process would destroy. The duplication of the canons, and the movement from the Yeoman's Canon to another whose identity is debatable, illustrate the working of "multiplication" in the structure of the tale and show that the mutabilitas is seen to work in an ever widening context.

The analogy of the tale to the furnace still holds. The top part of the furnace contains the product, the distillation or sublimation of the materials in the oven. In the successful exoteric process, this should be an immutable substance, pure gold. Nothing inheres in the second part of the Tale, however, but a sense of failure, and worse, a sense of sin. The canon who infects the town and is ". . . so variaunt, he abyt nowhere" (G, 1175) is a fiend. His "infinite falsness" (G, 976), the product of the process, is an elusive, uncontrollable quality which the Yeoman cannot adequately contain in his description. The second part closes with a moralizing section and a passage dealing with philosophical opinion which tend to draw the reader's attention from the particular to the cosmic level. Chaucer's use of the exemplum in part two also aids in moving the reader to a more generalized view.

The organization of the Prologue and Tale by the analogy with the alchemical furnace provides a concrete and easily imaginable structure for the idea of evil as it functions through the theme of endless mutabilitas. Chaucer also uses specific words to strengthen

the idea of evil in the mutabilitas theme. He modifies, for example, the meaning of the Yeoman's word "warne." The Yeoman first says he has warned or told his lord of the pilgrims' presence. The Host replies: "Freend, for thy warnyng God yeve thee good chaunce." (G, 593). Since the Yeoman has as yet said nothing derogatory about the Canon, this occurrence of the word cannot have the connotation of "beware." The irony which is later apparent changes the meaning of the third "warnyng" - "I warne yow wel, he is a passyng man" (G, 613). Even before we are aware of the irony, the statement causes uneasiness. Why use a word that may mean "beware" to describe "passyng," which may mean "excellent?" The answer comes later when the Canon quickly leaves the pilgrims and when the Yeoman describes the futility of alchemy. The Canon's love of alchemy disassociates him from the stability of God's Providence: the "slidyng science" makes him a most "passyng man" (G, 613).

Another instance in which Chaucer's language might be said to reinforce the theme of mutability is noted by J.E. Grennen. Although he does not discuss mutabilitas, Grennen sees the word "multiplie" as forming a link between the alchemists' purpose and God's.²⁷ God's creation is involved in mutabilitas through original sin, but will end again in stability in God. The alchemist's creation or "multiplication" results only in more mutability because of its constant failure. An air of instability develops in the Prologue and Tale because the language contains a mass of terms and ideas set in opposition to one

another but left unbalanced and unresolved. We find such contrasts as the Canon's haste and his supposed love of "daliaunce," and the Yeoman's intent to speak "in wordes fewe" (G, 618), and his actual amplification. The science of alchemy and the analogous structure of the tale both illustrate a multiplication which is damning, because in lacking a conclusion, it is ultimately a trap. Mutabilitas is imprisonment only if it is perceived from the world of matter, without spiritual illumination. What the structure, the specific words such as "multiplie," and the concentration on exoteric alchemy do in this tale is to keep the centre of reference on a material level. In this way the aesthetic form of the tale imparts strength to the thematic expression of the evil direction possible in change. The final warning against prying into "Goddess privetee":

For unto Crist it is so lief and deere
 That he wol nat that it discovered bee,
But where he liketh to his deitee
Men for t'inspire, and eek for to deffende
 Whan that hym liketh (G, 1467-11)
 (underlining mine)

impresses upon the reader the magnitude of sin in alchemy as a branch of man's attempted "privetee."

The aesthetic control which Chaucer exercises in this tale is more pronounced than in previous tales where the idea of evil is seen to have an aesthetic as well as theological function. The control in the Man of Law's Tale is not expressed by analogy with such a concrete and imaginable process as that of alchemy in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale. In the Man of Law's Tale, the aesthetic pattern is

harder to perceive than in the others, because although the tale moves in a circle, more emphasis is put upon the theological misconceptions and the movement or process of the tale than upon its shape. The theological function of evil as force is expressed through the personified, mechanical Satan and is strengthened by the presence of apostrophe. The Friar's Tale centres on the power of particular words to shape its structure and theological significance. The aesthetic pattern of evil is controlled by the irony of the abused word. The Summoner's Tale continues the concentration on words, and in taking the shape of a rhetorical fart divided on the apostles' wheel, it emphasizes the idea of evil through the aesthetic abuse of Christian order and pattern. Through the mirror image, the Merchant's Tale becomes a painting of the world which clearly represents the idea of evil in its function of ugliness and distortion. Aesthetically, it abuses Christian process. The Squire's Tale, unlike the others, is a simple representation of evil in complete aesthetic formlessness. If the aesthetic expression of the idea of evil was to follow Augustine's abstract definition of nothingness, the closest aesthetic representation would be formlessness, as in the Squire's Tale. As is evident from all the other tales just mentioned, this is not the case. Because the aesthetic functions of evil are manifest as the shapes of these tales, the reader is able to perceive the idea of evil as object - as abused word, as a fart, as a distorted picture - as well as perceiving involvement in evil as a process which leads away from God. The value of the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is that it brings together the perception of evil as object and the perception

of evil as process more clearly than do any of the earlier tales. In the earlier tales, the aesthetic functions of evil always make the thematic functions of evil more forceful, but they do not always emphasize the idea of movement or process. Although the ironic abuse of words in the Friar's Tale, for example, reverses the proper value of words, the aesthetic pattern of reversal does not in itself assume a theological direction. In the Summoner's Tale, the equation of the friar's words with the fart gives forceful expression to the friar's evil intent and reverses the proper order of Christian teaching, but it does not show as clearly as does the Canon's Yeoman's Tale the ultimate penalty for involvement in evil. Since the smell of the fart eventually disappears, we might say by analogy, that the evil words ultimately disappear into nothingness. But this is an idea which the reader must gain by interpretation and extension from the tale; it is not apparent within the tale itself. Because the Merchant's Tale is aesthetically a distorted reflection which reverses Christian ideals, it is more closely involved in evil as a process. The shape of the tale as a mirror makes the misconceptions of Januarie and the Merchant well defined. But again, the aesthetic shape does not lead the reader to a complete understanding of the end to which involvement in an evil process moves. Illusion, which is part of the process, is clear in the tale; damnation, which is the end of the process, is not.

These tales considered in isolation emphasize evil as object. This is the overall aesthetic function of evil in the Tales, without which the various theological functions would be less effective.

But ultimately, if there is not some balance between the forceful aesthetic representation of evil as object and the theological representation of evil as a process of disorder tending toward damnation or nothingness, there is a definite danger that the sheer weight of the aesthetic functions of evil in the tales of Groups B¹ to C may be more powerful than the movement of the work in pilgrimage toward the stability of divine order. It is partially because the tales of Group B² do not contain aesthetic functions of the idea of evil as object that they help to strengthen the orthodox theological idea of evil as disorder. But it is in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, which directly confronts the problem of the relationship of evil as object and evil as process, that a balance is finally achieved. Alchemy as the central concern of the tale allows both a concentration on the analogy between the alchemical furnace and the structure of the tale - evil as object - and a concentration on the accompanying mutabilitas - evil as process. The theme of multiplication which rises from the alchemical center assumes a double function which correlates the aesthetic structure and the theological meaning. It can signal amplificatio on one hand and attempted Godlike creation on the other. This function of the Canon's Yeoman's Tale is of paramount importance to the movement of the entire work in pilgrimage.

In the discussion of the aesthetic functions of evil, we have only considered those tales which best illustrate objectified evil. In order to understand completely the effects of the tales after

Group B², the Canon's Yeoman's Tale in particular, and to see how the work is made to move in pilgrimage, we must reconsider the combined theological and aesthetic functions of evil in most of the tales and also consider the effects of certain themes which are not fully expressed in any one tale but which work over the Tales as a whole. This examination will serve as a conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER V
THREADS OF EVIL

The Introduction and the Second and Third chapters of this study deal with the theological concept of evil and with the changes apparent in the theological functions of the idea of evil in the Canterbury Tales. The discussion of these changes makes clear the involvement of the work in a process which moves toward a Christian understanding of evil. By contrast, the examination of aesthetics in Chapter Four emphasizes the importance of the more static functions of evil. If there is any point of tension in this study of the Tales, it is between the theological concept of evil as a process moving toward formlessness or nothingness, and the forceful aesthetic expression of evil by means of ironic patterns of word, form, or process, which emphasizes evil as object. It is the purpose of this last chapter to show that there is no such tension in the order of the Tales taken as a whole.

In the Man of Law's Tale, although the apostrophe is a vehicle for the expression of evil as force, it is also evident that the idea of evil as force exists independent of the vehicle. The Man of Law's Tale appears to be the only tale purporting to deal with Christian doctrine in which the teller conceives of evil as an arbitrary force and in which this concept is reinforced by the tale's structure. There is an important difference between evil conceived

of as a force and evil operating as a force in the aesthetic structure. All the other pilgrims see the sinful characters in their tales as being in some way responsible for the evil consequences in which they are involved. The Friar, for example, sees the summoner's destruction as the result of the man's sins. In his tale, the perception of the power of evil carried by the words "feith" and "trouthe" is more the reader's than the pilgrims'. Here, the reader recognizes that it is the evil will and not evil as an abstract force which is being given expression through the ironic use of words. This concept is somewhat closer to a Christian understanding than that in the Man of Law's Tale. But evil will, as the tales of Group D illustrate, is itself forceful. The pilgrims and characters in this group are all power-seeking, strong willed and sinning individuals. Because of this, the emphasis in the tales falls more heavily upon an active, dynamic idea of evil than upon one of evil as disorder or formlessness. The patterned aesthetic functions of evil in the Friar's and Summoner's tales in particular increase this dynamism. The theological idea of evil as a process tending toward nothingness has little part in the aesthetic effect of the tales.

The sense of illusion which prevails in Groups E and F is not a lesser evil than that of the evil wills in the previous group, but it is a less openly forceful one. This statement holds from both the pilgrims' and the reader's perspective. The Friar and Summoner openly will evil toward one another, the Wife wills evil toward

uncooperative husbands, and these wills are reflected in the tales. In Groups E and F, the Envoy of the Clerk's Tale ironically expresses evil will toward husbands, and the Merchant might be accused of lack of charity for his wife, but neither of these instances of evil will are borne directly into the respective tales. From his higher perspective, the reader observes that the tales still indicate a desire to find perfection through earthly powers and loves, but that the pilgrims are not conscious of these desires as evil. This observation has both positive and negative functions. The reader understands that illusion is an insidious evil and that the pilgrims cannot move in pilgrimage until they are conscious of their illusions as such. But from the point of view of aesthetic development, the shift from evil as the force of an evil will to evil as illusion is a step closer to the Christian concept of an evil which is expressed in the comparatively weaker terms of evil as absence of true order. The aesthetic parody of Christian process in the Merchant's Tale is also a step closer to the combination of the functions of evil as object and evil as process than are the aesthetic patterns of irony of word and form in the Friar's and Summoner's tales. But the further development of this movement is hampered by the fact that the tales of Groups E and F are still bound in purely earthly matters. The reader is caught in the balance. The idea of evil as illusion which is present in the Merchant's and Franklin's tales moves us closer to the spiritual view which will minimize the power of evil; at the same time the concentration of the tales on the material world, on physical fact

without spiritual understanding, maximizes the force that evil can exert. This tense balance is even more apparent in the Pardoner's Prologue and Tale. From the central moral "Radix malorum est cupiditas" (C, 334), the tale moves in two directions: toward a spiritual understanding of the moral through the exemplum of the Tale, and toward an exemplification of utter depravity in the Pardoner. The development of the idea of evil has reached a static point.

The movement of the tales of Group B² which works to turn evil to good has already been noted. Essentially in the Prioress's Tale, the Tale of Melibee, and the Prologue and the Tale of the Nun's Priest, evil is transformed by the operation of some facet of Christian doctrine or order. The adherence within these tales to Christian principles provides a theological and aesthetic order which, because it replaces evil with good, places evil as disorder. There is no sense of struggle in the tales which would indicate that evil is a force which must be conquered. The power of good is manifest in the gift of miracle in the Prioress's Tale, in the gift of counsel in Melibee, and in the gift of grace in the Nun's Priest's Tale. The Prioress's Tale exemplifies the belief that Mary will intercede to help the innocent and the sinners who pray to her. Only because the Prioress rises above the remedies of the material world can she find a means of answering the worldly fact of evil. In the allegorical Tale of Melibee, Melibee is restored to wisdom and faith by the weight of Prudence's proverbial and Scriptural advice. Melibee's anger is

regarded not as evil will but as disorder; he is to be healed,
not punished further. Prudence advises him about good counsel:

Ye shul first in alle youre werkes mekely biseken to the heighe God
that he wol be youre conseilour;/ and shapeth yow to seich entente
that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone;/
'At alle tymes thou shalt blesse God, and praye hym to dresse thy weyes,
and looke that alle thy conseils been in hym for everemoore.'/ . . .
And thanne shul ye dryve fro youre herte thre thynges that been
contrariouse to good conseil;/ that is to seyn, ire, soveitise, and
hastifnesse. (B², 2305-7, 2310-11)

The proverbs Prudence uses are in accord with her Scriptural advice,
which is part of God's law for man and which restores the tale to
Christian order. The Knight raises moral and aesthetic objections
which stop the Monk's disordered and unorthodox account of tragedy.
Theologically, the Nun's Priest's Tale represents the most important
part of Christian order, the operation of grace. It is mainly
because these tales refer to Christian order, and not because of any
special merit or control on the part of the tellers, that the tales
provide a relief from the confusion, the evil will, illusion and
depravity of the previous tales. The only noticeable spiritual
difference between the tellers of the tale of B² and the others is that
the former, in turning to Christian order, appear to possess some
degree of humility and faith. That Chaucer chooses humility and faith
as factors to balance and transform the functions of evil would
seem to indicate that the Canterbury Tales is conceived within the
orthodox beliefs of the fourteenth century.

If we view the remaining tales with the concept of evil as
disorder in mind, we find that in spite of their involvement in sin,
they do not disrupt the movement of the Canterbury Tales in the

process of pilgrimage. In the Second Nun's Tale, Almachius, who exerts an evil will, is clearly regarded as a power insignificant in comparison to the power of faith in Christ. The representation of evil as disorder is clearest in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale. Just as the furnace is the instrument which effects multiplication in the alchemical process, so the tale itself, which is aesthetically structured to imitate the furnace, and which is therefore an objectification of evil, is at the same time part of the process of evil which is expressed as random mutabilitas. The functions of evil as object and evil as process are inseparable. The idea of mutabilitas can not be expressed without the support of the amplification and multiplication in the aesthetic structure, and the structure itself would be meaningless, if the theme of mutabilitas was absent. On all levels, the tale is a terrible parody, not a reversal, of divine order. The failure of the alchemical process, which is made evident by both the structure and by the theme of mutability, turns the tale into a representation of evil as disorder. The idea of evil functions here in Christian terms: it is a disorder of man's will and not a force uncontrolled by man. Even the Yeoman does not condemn mutability itself. He condemns alchemy as the cause of unprofitable mutability. Although the tale taken separately presents an example of a damnable state in man, it nevertheless provides a most positive means for the reader to perceive the function of evil when taken as part of the whole work. Change or mutabilitas which is the process of life is only loss when it is change ordered not by God, but by man's attempts at power.

In anticipation of Group B², Chaucer purposefully represents evil conceived of only as arbitrary force, sinful human will, illusion, or pride, in states of incomplete aesthetic and thematic control. Hence the power of evil in the Man of Law's, the Friar's, the Summoner's, and the Merchant's tales tends to be magnified by the use of rhetoric, the abuse of words, and by other aesthetic means. Only in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, where evil is presented as disorder, can it be completely controlled in the tale. This is a partial reason for the validity of the placement of the tale after the tales of Groups A to C, and after Group B². The concept of evil as disorder cannot be seen to have positive functions until the tales of Group B² have been experienced.

Within the medieval idea of hierarchy and established order, the Maunciple's Tale is another representation of disorder, though it is not as clearly formed as the Canon's Yeoman's Tale. "Bobbe-up-and-doun" is an apt description of the Maunciple's confused and contradictory tale. Phebus' "blered ye" is another symptom of disorder. The Parson's Tale represents the final didactic triumph of Christian order. It defines evil in terms of specific sins, categorizes them, and offers the remedy of penitence against them. The structure of the sermon is the ideal form by means of which the idea of evil as force is nullified, and idea of evil as disorder is finally controlled.

Basically, the aesthetic functions of evil are independent of one another and are equal in importance but can also be juxtaposed

to show their cumulative effect on the whole work. Ultimately, as in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, they are incorporated into the idea of evil as process. The changes in the aesthetic functions of the idea of evil parallel those in the theological functions, moving from expressions of evil as force to expressions of evil as disorder, and so finally ending in a Christian concept. In all cases the aesthetic function of evil increases the effectiveness of the corresponding theological function. The individual shape which the aesthetic function of evil imparts to each tale helps to keep the various theological functions distinct. For example, the abuse of form by the friar in the Summoner's Tale emphasizes the friar's evil will. In comparison, the abuse of Christian process by the Merchant and Januarie in the Merchant's Tale is an abuse which is much broader than the former, which is not the result of conscious evil will and which functions better as illusion than would the abuse of form. The different aesthetic shapes which evil assumes facilitate the reader's perception of the process of pilgrimage by forcing him to juxtapose and compare the different functions of evil, and so to perceive correctly that it is not a dramatic progression which moves the Tales, but basically a balancing of Groups A to C by Group B² and the remaining tales which makes the overall movement in pilgrimage possible. The final aesthetic and theological function of evil as disorder insures that the more forceful functions in the first half of the work do not disrupt the process of pilgrimage. In fact, because the concept of evil as disorder brings the earlier concepts under control, it assimilates them into the total process of the work.

Once the function of evil as disorder becomes apparent, it is much easier to perceive the movement of the Tales in pilgrimage. This perception is facilitated by the presence of the themes of game and earnest, "drunkenesse," and the "blered ye," which become a structural network connecting the individual tales and effecting the reader's understanding of the separate tales and of the work as a whole. The function of these themes can only properly be perceived after the reader has realized the importance of B² and G from a perspective beyond the Parson's Tale.

Although it is logically understandable that the Canterbury pilgrims wish to enjoy themselves, the fact that they are also on a pilgrimage should raise some questions about their definite preference of "game" over "ernest." The Knight begins the game, the narrator warns the reader in the Miller's Prologue not to make earnest of game, and the Host holds many of the pilgrims to game by calling for merry tales. References to drunkenness, which is a facet of game, run parallel to it in the framework. The pilgrims are drinking at the Tabard when they approve the Host's plan. The drunken Miller interrupts the Host's request to the Monk, the Wife and Host swear by drink, the Pardoner appears to drink as he tells his tale, and the Cook falls off his horse for drunkenness. Because the reader is well aware of the misconceptions and sins in which the pilgrims are involved, and because he is aware of the significant possibilities in the frame of a pilgrimage, he can do nothing but take the pilgrims' drunkenness and game with some degree of negative

"erdest" perception. But Chaucer invites both positive perception of game as game, and perception of game as "erdest." The preservation of game on the pilgrims' level is essential to the development of a Christian concept of evil on the reader's. Consider the effect if the tales as they stand were told in "erdest." "Erdest" cannot help but reveal all meanings and intentions, whether good or evil, as conscious. Under "game" however, the same meanings and intentions, which are more often evil than good, can appear to be unconscious. Even such a forceful tale as the Wife of Bath's can retreat under the cover of "game." "Game" absorbs some of the pilgrims' misconceptions, and in doing so, makes them less forceful and less dramatically sinful than they would be if they were spoken in naked "erdest." The presence of game does not hide the sins, but it effectively prevents them all from appearing as the result of purely evil will. A theological tract might be structured to stand the force of this "erdest" sort of expression of evil, but the Tales, as a work of art, is not. So although the "game" is in itself a part of the pilgrims' sin, it is a necessary part of the aesthetic structure. The reader must see this to begin to appreciate the "erdest" in Chaucer's use of "game."

But "erdest" is necessary on a theological level as well as "game." While the pilgrims drink and play, Chaucer offers, through the tales, authority which opposes their actions. We are told in the Knight's Tale that "to a dronke man the wey is slider" (A, 1264). This cannot help but remind the reader of the disorder of the "slidyng

science" in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale. The Tale of Melibee relates drunkenness with a lack of "erdest." Prudence says "Thou shalt also eschue the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe" (B², 2382), and explains to Melibee "Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, 'a man that drynketh hony'/ Thou hast ydronke so muchel hony of sweete temporel riches, and delices and honours of this world,/that thou are dronken, and hast forgotten Jhesu Crist thy creatour " (B², 2600-2). This category of spiritual drunkenness includes even more of the pilgrims than the category of physical drunkenness. In relation to the physical and spiritual aspect of drunkenness, game might be seen to have the same levels. It is acceptable from the pilgrims' point of view only on a physical, literal level. The whole idea of pilgrimage is inimical to that of spiritual game. On this higher level the pilgrims' choice of "game" is "slider"; they cannot see "which thyng is wel beset" (Parl. of Fowls, 598).

Just as physical drunkenness causes the physical eye to be blurred, so spiritual drunkenness has a like effect upon the understanding of God's order and the potential for moving in a process of pilgrimage. The "blered ye" theme sometimes runs concurrent with actual mention of drunkenness, and sometimes independent of it. John the Carpenter in the Miller's Tale suffers from spiritual drunkenness in the form of cupiditas. The Miller comments upon him disparagingly:

Lo, which a greet thyng is affeccioun,
Men may dyen of ymaginacioun,
So depe may impressioun be take. (A, 3611-13)

Both Januarie and Phebus suffer from the same complaint which is in essence the "blered ye." Again, this theme reminds us of the Canon's Yeoman's Tale and the Yeoman's statement: "And of my swynk yet blered is myn ye" (G, 730). The reader receives a particular warning against this condition in the Nun's Priest's Tale. Chauntecleer admonishes the fox:

And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt namoore, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to synge and wynke with myn ye;
For he that wynketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, God lat him nevere thee! (B², 4617-22)

All three of these interrelated themes, "game" and "erdest," drunkenness and the "blered ye," influence the ways in which the reader understands the Canterbury Tales. On a literal level game and drunkenness are acts of the conscious will. But on a spiritual level, since the world of the Canterbury Tales is a fallen one, the spiritual drunkenness and blindness function in the same way as the idea of game: they are presented as disorders rather than consciously evil acts. For instance, we cannot say that Januarie deliberately favors illusion over clear sight; he simply fails to recognize his sin or the misfortunes he suffers as the results of sin. In the cases of the majority of the pilgrims, there is no evidence to prove that they consciously and deliberately maintain a state of spiritual game, drunkenness and blindness. They are simply not that well developed as characters. Therefore the presence of the three themes, in absence of information to support the idea of conscious evil and deliberate self-deceptive will, tend to make the pilgrims' sins

appear not less dangerous, but less self-determined. The function of the themes must be understood as it relates to other developments in the Tales. We have previously noted in the tales from the Knight's to the Pardoner's an increasing consciousness of sin in the pilgrims, terminating with the Pardoner's declared pride in sin. Throughout the group there is both an increasing emphasis on sin and also several changes in the concept of evil which bring it closer to a Christian concept. In the tales of Group B², the basic change is again related to the idea of evil. These tales move yet closer to a Christian concept because they utilize the presence of evil to illustrate various points of Christian belief. By turning evil to good, they define it as a disorder in a world where Christianity can and does provide order. This group effectively reduces evil from its former position of aesthetic and thematic power. After Group B², Chaucer is free to define evil as disorder in the more abstract but now understandable terms of mutabilitas. Once the potential of order has been established, the tales of Groups G and H, especially the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, may be used to distinguish between the process of change which leads man to God and the endless mutability which is damnation. These last tales are of value on a more abstract level only because the movement of the previous tales leads to a Christian concept of evil, and with it a concept of order. If the Canon's Yeoman's Tale was found before Group B², or if the movement of the tales was not toward a Christian understanding of good and evil, then this tale more than any other would threaten to invalidate the given frame of pilgrimage. As the tale stands, it illustrates the Yeoman's damnable involvement in

mutabilitas. But this is not its most important function. As an illustration of evil as disorder, and in its relation to the other tales, it has the positive function of putting evil in a place where it can be subsumed under Christian good. Only when evil has been properly defined is it aesthetically or theologically possible and profitable to encounter the Parson's Tale. Theologically, evil cannot be remedied unless it is recognized. The sinner can do nothing against the idea of evil as arbitrary force or that of evil as illusion. Aesthetically, the didacticism of the Parson's Tale would destroy the movement of the work if it occurred earlier in the Tales. Because the Parson's Tale is the law, it must be in "erdest." No tale of "game" could follow the Parson's Tale without damning itself and its teller, and so completely changing the meanings of the Tales. Since the frame of the Tales is pilgrimage and the goal of pilgrimage is salvation, such damnation would destroy the aesthetic structure and the theological purpose of the work.

It is in relation to this total structure and purpose that the themes of "game" and "erdest," drunkenness, and blindness function. Although their effect in mitigating the power of evil may run counter to the effect of the tales from the Knight's to the Pardoner's, it is in perfect harmony with the overall movement of the Tales in a process of pilgrimage because it helps to maintain a human and pitiable quality in the idea of evil which might otherwise be seen as all too wilful and damnable. The Parson's Tale is the high theological ideal; game, drunkenness, and blindness are human facts.

Once the presence of these three themes is perceived, the reader is able to use them to correlate more closely the complex of aesthetic and theological functions of evil in the entire work. Spiritual game, drunkenness and blindness are coordinate; separately or together they indicate a spiritual state of misconception and sin. We will concentrate upon the idea of spiritual game to further illustrate the effects of evil in the Tales. Since spiritual "errest" in a Christian context would ultimately lead the pilgrims to the highest good, "game" can be seen as leading to damnation. Therefore, any situation, emotion, conception, or aesthetic structure which emphasizes evil can be seen as part of spiritual "game." When the tales are perceived in isolation from one another, "game" dominates. The chaos in the Knight's Tale, the anger in the Miller's and Reeve's tales, the representation of evil as force in the Man of Law's Tale, the magic in the Wife's, Squire's and Franklin's tales, the abuse of word and form in the Friar's and Summoner's tales, the false paradise of logic in the Clerk's Tale, the illusion in the Merchant's Tale, and the mutabilitas in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale are all manifestations or results of involvement in spiritual "game."

The term "game" provides a means of loosely defining the spiritual state of most of the pilgrims, but it is a rather protean word and so does not effectively increase the reader's understanding of the evil which has already been noted in the tales or discussed in the study. The Canon's Yeoman's Tale provides a term which has the

same properties and end as "game" but which better defines the qualities which make "game" damnable. Mutabilitas, as it is used in the Yeoman's tale, defines involvement in the game of alchemy as involvement in attempted multiplication of both material objects and spiritual power, and as entrapment in endless and fruitless change. The Canon's and Yeoman's involvement in mutabilitas is made clear in the tale through the failure of their multiplication. The term "multiple," as the Yeoman uses it, refers to the goals of both exoteric and esoteric alchemy. In the exoteric branch, to multiply is to attempt to turn base metals into gold; in the esoteric branch, it is an attempt to duplicate God's spiritual power of creation and control - "Goddess privetee" - on a human level. Of both types of multiplication the Yeoman says:

Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it nevere fynde.
 Ye been as boold as is Bayard the blynde,
 That blondreth forth, and peril casteth noon.
 He is as boold to renne agayn a stoon
 As for to goon bisides in the weye.
 So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.
 If that youre eyen kan nat seen aright,
 Looke that youre mynde lakke noght his sight.
 (G, 1412-19)

In this statement the reader perceives an equation between involvement in multiplication and blindness as a spiritual disorder, both of which cause entrapment in undesirable mutabilitas. As has been already noted, spiritual blindness is synonomous with spiritual game. Multiplication in any manifestation gives rise to irony such as that found in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale.

Multiplication operates in the structure of the Canon's

Yeoman's Tale as well as working on the spiritual level to show involvement in mutabilitas. As in other tales which manifest a clearly definable aesthetic function of evil, the shape of this tale is highly structured. Multiplication, which on a spiritual level signals disorder, is represented in an ordered and controlled means by the aesthetic structure. But whereas in other tales, the Friar's or Summoner's, for example, the aesthetic expression of evil as object does not correlate with the theological function of evil as process, here the aesthetic and theological functions coincide. Abuse of words does not signal a process, but multiplication signals mutabilitas on all levels. Because the spiritual attempts at multiplication fail, the tale, whose center is alchemy, becomes a parody of the operation of Creation and Providence. In the tale, the spiritual failure is made clear by the failure of alchemy on the material level. And both spiritual and material failure are made clear by the structure of the tale, which because it represents the alchemical furnace, is itself a parody of the God-controlled process of creation. The term "multiplie" in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale can therefore signal both spiritual disorder and a diabolical structural parody of true order.

Having recognized the meanings of "multiplication" in this tale, the reader can easily perceive the utility of the term in describing the aesthetic and theological functions of evil in other tales. Multiplication as attempted duplication of God's power is evident throughout the tales in the theme of "privetee." The Pardoner

and the tellers of tales in Groups D, E, and F all exhibit this desire for power or "privetee." The Wife's power is sovereignty; the Clerk's, logic; the Squire's, romance; and the Franklin's, rhetoric. And as we have seen, these forms of "privetee" fail to provide the order which "Goddess privetee" provides. Multiplication also includes forms of spiritual "privetee" such as magic. Magic is present in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale as alchemy and is also part of the Wife's, the Squire's and the Franklin's tales. The Wife's tale relies upon magic or multiplication for its "happy" ending. The Squire's Tale retreats into magic and romance. The Franklin works rhetorical magic in making his tale appear to represent a perfect marriage. But in all these tales, because the use of magic bypasses Christian virtues, magic functions as disorder. In the Franklin's Tale in particular, magic is shown to be illusion. Illusion as a form of multiplication is in turn evident in the Merchant's Tale. The true order of love is multiplied in Januarie's mind. But because his mind is compared to a mirror, the picture which he perceives is a complete reversal of the order of caritas. By relying on forms of multiplication, the Clerk, the Merchant, the Squire, and the Franklin each create for themselves a false paradise. Magic as it is first shown in the Wife's tale appears to work a miracle, the magic of the Clerk's logic is less successful, and the Merchant's and Franklin's tales together show multiplication or magic to be illusion. The value of the Canon's Yeoman's Tale in the changing treatment of magic is that it finally shows magic to be a form of multiplication which involves the individuals who employ it in damnable mutabilitas.

In this way the theme of multiplication which is present in the tales of Groups D, E, F, and G helps to unite various theological functions of evil and to show very clearly that involvement in spiritual game is involvement in a process moving away from God.

As is evident in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, multiplication can also be present in the aesthetic structure of a tale and so can relate to the aesthetic functions of evil. There are numerous examples of multiplication in structure. Only enough will be mentioned to give the reader a general idea of the way in which multiplication influences the aesthetic functions of evil. Just as multiplication as "privetee" or magic is an abuse of divine order, so multiplication has a like symbolic effect in the structure of the tales. The structure of the dialogue in the Friar's Tale is based on the abuse of "feith" and "trouthe" and so upon an abuse of their true meanings in a Christian order. The aesthetic function of evil in the Summoner's Tale is a multiplication of the structure of Gospel as a fart. Multiplication in the Merchant's Tale shapes the tale as a mirror of illusion instead of a mirror of divine illumination and so abuses the process of caritas which leads men to God. In more specific instances, multiplication is present in any parody or misinterpretation of Scripture. The Man of Law's Tale, because it is a complete misunderstanding of Christian doctrine, can be seen as a form of multiplication. The abuse of lines from the Song of Songs in the Miller's and Merchant's tales is an example of parody as multiplication. When these aesthetic structures or objectifications of evil are seen

as multiplication, they may be seen, as is the aesthetic expression of evil objectified in the furnace in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, as part of a process which is an evil abuse of divine order and which therefore leads away from God. Because the theme of multiplication helps to bring all the functions of evil in the tales first into a process which moves in the opposite direction to pilgrimage, and then in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale brings the aesthetic and theological functions of evil together and defines them as disorder, it ultimately enhances the effects of Group B², and strengthens the movement of the work in pilgrimage.

There may be some question about the conclusions reached regarding the aesthetic functions of evil in the latter part of this chapter as compared to those reached in Chapter Four, and in the beginning of Chapter Five. In the beginning of this chapter, it was mentioned that the distinct aesthetic shape of tales such as the Summoner's helps the reader to distinguish the steps through which the theological process of the Canterbury Tales proceeds. It was suggested that the aesthetic structures of certain tales express evil as object. In the discussion of the aesthetic functions of evil in the latter part of this chapter, it was shown that through the ubiquitous theme of multiplication, the aesthetic functions of evil as object are ultimately assimilated into the movement of theological process. One might ask how the functions of evil as object can, on the one hand, forcefully define the steps of a process and, on the other, can be subsumed in the process itself. The answer lies in the entire structure of the Canterbury Tales. Using R.M. Jordan's comment that medieval

poets regarded their poems as "finite, limited illusions,"² we can perceive the Tales as a structure defined and limited by the frame of pilgrimage. In physical terms this pilgrimage is to go to Canterbury and then return to the Tabard. The process in which the work is involved develops within this given frame. Just as the total process is contained in this frame, so the parts of the process are contained within the particular aesthetic shape of each tale. When we view only the first part of the work from Groups A to C, we see that the process is one which puts increasing emphasis on evil and at the same time moves the concept of evil from that of evil as force in the Man of Law's Tale to evil as illusion in the Merchant's and Franklin's tales. It is within this large process that the expressions of evil as object function in making clear the changes in the concept of evil. The second part of the work from Group B² to the Parson's Tale is a process of defining evil as disorder and simultaneously illustrating the power of Christian order as a remedy for evil. In this part, the Canon's Yeoman's Tale manifests the most important expression of evil as object. The theme of multiplication in this tale shows clearly that the expression of evil as object is assimilated into the theological idea of evil as a disordered process. The recognition of this theme then serves as a point from which to perceive both aesthetic functions of evil as object and theological functions of evil as process in the earlier tales, as part of undesirable mutabilitas. It is because multiplication implies mutabilitas that it is the most important function of the themes of game, drunkenness, and blindness.

When we move through the work from the Knight's to the Parson's tale, we become involved with each separate step in which the process of the work moves. Only when we look back upon the work from beyond the Parson's Tale do we see the totality of the process. At this point only do we achieve the perspective of Chaucer upon the work. From this point, the spiritual motion which the work expresses is apparent. The specific aesthetic shapes of evil, and the various thematic functions of evil are parts of the total expression. From this perspective, the form of each tale in the first part of the work can be seen to be determined by the process in which that part is involved, and the form of the whole first part, in turn, can be seen to be determined by the process of pilgrimage which the whole of the Canterbury Tales expresses.³

By concentrating on the functions of evil, which appear to dominate especially in the first half of the Tales, this study has attempted to delineate the particular way in which the work expresses a spiritual motion of pilgrimage. This expression has been seen first to be a process of moving the concept of evil toward a Christian definition, and second, a process of establishing a concept of Christian order. In terms of spiritual motion, the second part of the process depends upon the first. The total expression of pilgrimage is only possible because the second part of the process rises through and assimilates the first. Although the process of pilgrimage is expressed within the frame of a pilgrimage to Canterbury, the spiritual motion toward God extends beyond the frame. For this reason, the work itself, which is an imitation of a worldly pilgrimage and so a

form of artistic magic, is not a parody or abuse of Christian order. In the Parson's Tale, the work reaches an end. It is an end whose meaning is clearly expressed by a comment of Francis Fergusson upon Dante's Purgatorio. It is " a limit of human vision and spiritual capacity - yet at the same time pointing ahead."⁴

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

¹All quotations from Chaucer's works are taken from F. N. Robinson's The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Second Edition.

²Augustine, Of True Religion, vi, 10., 11-12.

³Ibid., xxvi, 49., 45-6.

⁴Ibid., xi, 21., 20.

⁵See Frederick Tupper's articles "Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins", "The Quarrels of the Canterbury Pilgrims", and "Chaucer's Sinners and Sins."

⁶Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, 12.

⁷Leff, Medieval Thought, 268.

⁸Augustine, Of True Religion, xx, 38., 33-4.

⁹Ibid., xx, 38., 33.

¹⁰Ibid., xx, 39., 34.

¹¹Ibid., xi, 21., 20.

CHAPTER II

¹See Joan Raphael Huber's work Chaucer's Concept of Death. This study, although it would appear to be related to the concept of evil, was not found to be of particular value.

²For instance, Tupper's articles on sins - see Chapter 1, note 3 - and John L. Lowes' reply "Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins", have little relevance to this study. Theodore Spencer's article "Chaucer's Hell: A Study in Medieval Convention", is equally of little value.

³See "Chaucer's Man of Law as Interpreter", 150.

⁴These are the major areas of Wood's discussion. I am not indebted to Wood's interpretation, although we concur on the importance of the relationship of teller to tale, and on the misunderstandings inherent in the Man of Law's interpretation of statements, ideas, and events.

⁵The Wife mentions that she gave her possessions over to Jankyn at their marriage. She does not mention this in relation to her other marriages.

⁶See Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer, 27, 317-31, 380-2.

⁷Ibid., 34-45.

⁸Anton-Hermann Chroust, in his article "The Metaphysics of Time and History in Early Christian Thought", gives an excellent explanation of the limitations of the Classical concept of time and eternity. He writes:

The most profound Greek thinkers, to be sure, have essayed to interpret temporal life as a reproduction of eternity. But this form of interpretation failed to visualize the entrance of the eternal into time, the meeting of time and eternity Its obvious failure to offer any newer and wider spiritual and moral horizons, as well as its inability to point to a morally significant future transcending the momentariness of the pleasures of intellectual or aesthetic repose and retreat from the world and, hence, from time itself; - this definite limitation became a real burden the very moment the defects of temporal life, even the most virtuous, could no longer be denied (329).

⁹The order A B¹ B² is suggested by Skeat and Baugh. See Albert C. Baugh, ed. Chaucer's Major Poetry.

¹⁰Germaine Dempster's article "A Period of the Development of the Canterbury Tales Marriage Group and of Blocks B² and C", and Robert A. Pratt's work, "The Order of the Canterbury Tales", offer support for Skeat's order and for the validity of the Bradshaw Shift. Their opinions are based upon historical and MSS study; support for the order A B¹ D E F C B² in this study is based upon aesthetic considerations.

¹¹Tatlock, "The Canterbury Tales in 1400", 113.

¹²Tupper, "The Quarrels of the Canterbury Pilgrims", 270.

CHAPTER III

¹For a different interpretation of the Knight's Tale, see Joseph Westlund's article, "The Knight's Tale as an Impetus for

Pilgrimage", 527. Westlund holds that Theseus makes noble efforts to bring order out of chaos, and that his only partial success forces the reader to look up to find a higher order. While I agree that the reader ultimately perceives the need for an order superior to that in the Knight's Tale, and sees the replacement of the values in the tale by Christian order in the later tales, I do not think that Theseus' efforts are particularly noble. Rather, they seem to contribute to the sense of chaos which I believe is the immediate effect of the tale on the pilgrims and on the reader. If the Knight's Tale was placed after tales which refer to Christian order, it would appear clearly inadequate and would function as Westlund suggests. As it stands, it is too early in the work to allow the reader to presume that any higher order will be found.

²Cf. Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer, 317-31.

³For a similar interpretation see Earle Birney's article "'After His Ymage' The Central Ironies of the Friar's Tale."

⁴Kittredge, "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage", 438, 440-2.

⁵Ibid., 464-67.

⁶The nature of Arveragus' and Dorigen's relationship is more fully discussed by Paul E. Gray in his article "Synthesis and the Double Standard in the Franklin's Tale."

⁷See "The Promises in the Franklin's Tale", 339.

⁸See "Chaucer's Pardoner The Scriptural Eunuch", 186.

⁹See E. Talbot Donaldson's article "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature: The Opposition", in Dorothy Bethrum's Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, 17.

¹⁰Augustine, Of True Religion, vi, 10., 11-12.

¹¹This opinion is supported in the recent work of D.W. Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer; R.M. Jordan, Chaucer and the Shape of Creation, and C. Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition. Kittredge's theories on the Marriage Group tend to move toward a dramatic interpretation of the movement of the Tales.

¹²Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey, Chaucer, 15.

¹³Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

¹"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35); "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak un to you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63).

²de Neef, "Robertson and the Critics", 205.

³de Bruyne, The Esthetics of the Middle Ages, 1.

⁴Ibid., 34

⁵Cited in E. Talbot Donaldson's article, "Patristic Exegesis: The Opposition", in Dorothy Bethurum's Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, 4.

⁶See Charles Donahue, "Patristic Exegesis: The Summation", Bethurum, Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, 77.

⁷Leff, Medieval Thought, 270.

⁸This belief is also the basis of Robertson's approach.

⁹See The Esthetics of the Middle Ages, 30.

¹⁰Ibid., 173

¹¹See Robertson's comments on the difference between medieval and modern aesthetics in A Preface to Chaucer, 45-6.

¹²Cited in Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 506.

¹³Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians", 15.

¹⁴Cited in Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, 480.

¹⁵For an explanation of the difference between the Classical and Christian concepts of time, and the significance of the Christian concept to human events, see Oscar Cullmann's Christ and Time, 51-60., and Anton-Hermann Chroust's article "The Metaphysics of Time and History in Early Christian Thought."

¹⁶Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians", 15.

¹⁷Augustine, Of True Religion, xxxv, 65., 62.

¹⁸Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer, 27.

¹⁹See Jordan, "The Non-Dramatic Disunity of the Merchant's Tale", 294. ". . . the governing intelligence is not concentrated, and . . . the psyche of the Merchant of the prologue is not a satisfactory focal point for defining a dramatic unity."

²⁰Charles A. Owen, Jr. in "The Crucial Passages in Five of the Canterbury Tales", 301., expresses the same idea about the Merchant.

²¹de Bruyne, The Esthetics of the Middle Ages, 173.

²²The correspondence between the alchemical furnace and the structure of the Prologue and Tale has not, to my knowledge, been noted in any other analysis of the tale.

²³See R.G. Baldwin, "The Yeoman's Canons: A Conjecture", and Judith Herz, "The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale."

²⁴Gennen, "The Canon's Yeoman and the Cosmic Furnace", 235.

²⁵Holmyard, Alchemy, 23.

²⁶Damon, "Chaucer and Alchemy", 783.

²⁷See "The Canon's Yeoman and the Cosmic Furnace", 227, 229.

CHAPTER V

¹See Cullmann, Christ and Time, 51-5. Undesirable mutabilitas in Christian terms is rather like the Classical concept of time: to be caught in either is "an enslavement, . . . a curse" (52).

²Jordan, Chaucer and the Shape of Creation, 8.

³This concept of the relation of part to whole is taken from Dante's letter to Can Grande, Dantis Alagherii Epistolae, Epistola X, 12, 201.

⁴Fergusson, Dante's Drama of the Mind, 213.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Augustine, Saint. Confessions. Trans. by R.S. Pine-Coffin. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961.
- , Of True Religion. Trans. by J.H.S. Burleigh. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953.
- Baldwin, R.G. "The Yeoman's Canons: A Conjecture", JEGP, LXI (1962), 232-43.
- Baugh, Albert C., ed. Chaucer's Major Poetry, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963.
- Bethurum, Dorothy, ed. Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Birney, Earle. "'After His Ymage' The Central Ironies of the Friar's Tale", MS, XXI (1959), 17-35.
- Bruyne, Edgar de. The Esthetics of the Middle Ages. Trans. by E.B. Hennessy. New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1969.
- Chroust, Anton-Hermann. "The Metaphysics of Time and History in Early Christian Thought", New Scholasticism, XIX (1945), 322-52.
- Cochrane, Charles Norris. Christianity and Classical Culture. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.
- Cullmann, Oscar. Christ and Time. Trans. by F.V. Filson. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1951.
- Damon, S.F. "Chaucer and Alchemy", PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 782-88.
- Dempster, Germaine. "A Period in the Development of the Canterbury Tales Marriage Group and of Blocks B² and C", PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 1142-59.
- De Neef, A. Leigh. "Robertson and the Critics", The Chaucer Review, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1968), 205-36.
- Fergusson, Francis. Dante's Drama of the Mind. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Gaylord, Alan T. "The Promise in The Franklin's Tale", ELH, XXXI (1964), 331-65.

- Goldin, Frederick. The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric. Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- Gordon, James D. "Chaucer's Retraction: A Review of Opinion", Studies in Medieval Literature. Edited by MacEdward Leach. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961, 81-96.
- Gray, Paul Edward. "Synthesis and the Double Standard in the Franklin's Tale", TSL, Vol. 6 (1965-66), 213-24.
- Grennen, Joseph E. "The Canon's Yeoman's Alchemical 'Mass'", SP, LXII (1965), 546-60.
- , "The Canon's Yeoman and the Cosmic Furnace: Structure and Meaning in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale", Criticism, IV (1962), 225-40.
- Herz, Judith. "The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale", MP, LVIII (1961), 231-37.
- Holmyard, E.J. Alchemy. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1957.
- Huber, Joan Raphael. Chaucer's Concept of Death in "The Canterbury Tales". Unpublished dissertation. University of Pittsburgh, Ph. D., 1967; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970.
- Huppe, Bernard F. and D. W. Robertson, Jr. Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Jordan, R. M. "The Non-Dramatic Disunity of the Merchant's Tale", PMLA, LXXVIII (1963), 293-99.
- , Chaucer and the Shape of Creation. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Kittredge, George L. "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage", MP, IX (1911-12), 435-67.
- Knowles, David. The Evolution of Medieval Thought. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962..
- Leff, Gordon. Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958.
- Lowes, John L. "Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins", PMLA, XXX (1915), 237-371.
- Manly, John M. "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians", The Proceedings of the British Academy, XXI (1926), 3-21.

- Miller, Robert. "Chaucer's Pardoner The Scriptural Eunuch, and the Pardoner's Tale", Speculum, XXX (1955), 180-99.
- Mogan, Joseph J., Jr. Chaucer and the Theme of Mutability. Unpublished dissertation. Louisiana State University, Ph.D., 1961; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970.
- Muscantine, C. Chaucer and the French Tradition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- Owen, Charles H., Jr. "The Crucial Passages in Five of the Canterbury Tales: A Study in Irony and Symbol", JEGP, LII (1953), 294-311.
- Pratt, Robert A. "The Order of the Canterbury Tales", PMLA, LXVI (1951), 1141-67.
- Robertson, D.W., Jr. A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962.
- Robinson, F.N., ed. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Second Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.
- Slaughter, Eugene E. Virtue According to Love - in Chaucer. New York: Bookman Associates, 1957.
- Spencer, Theodore. "Chaucer's Hell: A Study in Medieval Convention", Speculum, II (1927), 177-200.
- Tatlock, J. S. P. "The Canterbury Tales in 1400", PMLA, L (1953), 100-39
- Toynbee, Paget., trans. Dantis Alagherii Epistolae The Letters of Dante. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920.
- Tupper, Frederick. "Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins", PMLA, XXIX (1914), 93-128.
- ". "Chaucer's Sinners and Sins", JEGP, XV (1916), 56-106.
- ". "The Quarrels of the Canterbury Pilgrims", JEGP, XIV (1915), 256-70.
- Westlund, Joseph. "The Knight's Tale as an Impetus for Pilgrimage", PQ, XLIX (1965), 526-37.
- Wilhelm, James. The Cruellest Month. London: Yale Press, 1965.
- Wood, Chauncey. "Chaucer's Man of Law as Interpreter", Traditio, XXIII (1967), 149-90.

B29956